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THE

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CONTENTS OF VOL. XXIX.

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1855.

SERMON.		PAGE.
DCXL.—Life's Changing Current, 1 Chron. xxix. 29, 30,	By Rev. S. T. Spear, D.D.,	5
DCXLI.—Citizenship in Heaven, Phil. iii. 20,	By Rev. W. S. Tyler,	16
The Good Shepherd,		27
DCXLII.—The Triumphs of Temperance, Ps. cxxvi. 3,	By Rev. John Marsh, D.D.,	29
DCXLIII.—Religious Progress: The Blade, The Ear, The Full Corn, Mark iv. 28,	By Rev. William Warren,	44
DCXLIV.—Divinity of Christ, John i. 1,	By Rev. Isaac P. Stryker,	53
DCXLV.—God and Mammon, Matt. vi. 24,	By Rev. Leverett Griggs,	65
DCXLVI.—The Love of Home—its Influence on Religion and Character, 2 Kings iv. 13,	By Rev. Amos Blanchard,	73
DCXLVII.—Piety in the Aged, Luke ii. 37,	By Rev. Lewis H. Reid,	84
DCXLVIII.—Prayer for the Conversion of the World, Matt. vi. 10,	By Rev. Justus Doolittle,	90
DCXLIX.—The Judgment of Conscience compared with the Judgment of God, 1 John iii. 20, 21,	By Rev. H. A. Nelson,	97
DCL.—The Spiritual Culture of Evangelical Christianity, Ps. lxxxvii. 6,	By Rev. Robert M'Gonegal,	105
DCLI.—The Leaven of the Kingdom, Matt. xiii. 33,	By Rev. J. M. Sherwood,	117
DCLII.—Ministerial Support, 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14, Gal. vi. 6, 7, Luke xxi. 1–4,	By Rev. Amzi Benedict,	129
DCLIII.—Love of Life in the Middle Aged, Ps. cii. 24,	By Rev. Edwin F. Hatfield, D.D.,	141
DCLIV.—Keeping the Door of the Lips, Ps. cxli. 3,	By Rev. Joseph F. Tuttle,	153
DCLV.—The Unknown Depths of Depravity, 2 Kings viii. 13,	By Rev. A. B. Van Zandt, D.D.,	161
DCLVI.—Christian Meekness Honorable, Prov. xix. 11,	By Rev. Edmund B. Fairfield,	168
DCLVII.—Things that cannot be Shaken, Heb. xii. 26, 27,	By Rev. Jonathan Greenleaf,	179
DCLVIII.—Dependence on God, 1 Chron. xx. 11–18, Ps. cxxvii. 1,	By Rev. George Shepard, D.D.,	185
DCLIX.—The Days of Old, Deut. xxxii. 7,	By Rev. Aaron L. Lindsley,	192
DCLX.—Autumnal Lessons; or, The Leaf an Emblem of Man, Isa. lxiv. 6,	By Rev. Edmund Neville, D.D.,	205
DCLXI.—The Duty of Thanksgiving, Ps. c. 1, 4,	By Rev. Edmund Neville, D.D.,	213
DCLXII.—God Stirs up His People, Deut. xxxii. 11, 12,	By Rev. Emerson Davis, D.D.,	220
DCLXIII.—Principles of Constant Obedience, 1 Cor. xv. 58,	By Rev. E. Carpenter,	226
DCLXIV.—The Bow in the Cloud, Ezekiel i. 26–29,	By Rev. Joseph P. Thompson,	229
DCLXV.—The Credulity of Infidelity, Ps. lxxxii. 5, Rom. i. 22,	By Rev. George F. Wiswell;	238
Doctrine the Basis of Practice,		250
DCLXVI.—A Plea for Seamen, Ps. cvii. 23,	By Rev. Edmund Neville, D.D.,	253
DCLXVII.—Earth Transitory—Heaven Abiding, Heb. xiii. 14,	By Rev. C. Moore,	263

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SERMON DCXL.

BY THE REV. S. T. SPEAR, D.D.,

OF BROOKLYN, N. Y.

LIFE'S CHANGING CURRENT.

"Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, with all his reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries."—1 CHRONICLES xxix. 29, 30.

By "the times that went over him," the inspired writer obviously means the series of changes in the varying history of David's life, wrought by the progress of time, and completed when the monarch and bard of Israel was gathered unto his fathers. David had been a conspicuous character; many changes had crossed his path; though not wholly unsullied by vice, still many virtues adorned his brow; elevated by a special providence to the cares and perils of a throne, he discharged the duties thereof with fidelity to his God; and having reigned forty years, seven in Hebron, and thirty-three in Jerusalem, "he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honor." His acts, his reign, his might, and "the times that went over him," were deemed worthy of a record for transmission to a future age.

In the meditations of this morning, let us then direct our particular attention to the exceedingly suggestive phrase which occurs in the latter of the above verses,—"*And the times that went over him.*" It is obvious that what was true of King David, is substantially true of every man. "The times" are passing over all; and though but few can hope to secure even a brief chapter in the annals of the world, still every one has his own individual life. To him it is an interesting scene, in prospect, and in retrospect: it is his life; and "the times" that pass over him, are matters of the most lasting moment to himself. The mutations and modifications of one's being, as he passes down the stream of time; the never ceasing

current of changes to which he is subject, in which he so intimately shares, and by which he is to be so permanently affected ; the steady and unintermitted action of causes within him and without him, all tending to some final result—this to the eye of meditation is far more imposing and solemn than the rare though striking incidents of life. Such a theme befits the present hour. It is appropriate to the instructive suggestions of the closing, and the opening year.

The general fact of change with the progress of our years, admits of no denial. Who in this audience is now in all respects just what he was one year ago? To whom is the past year a perfect blank, leaving him exactly where it found him, with not a solitary trace to show that he ever enjoyed such a period? To whom has it been nothing but a mere lapse of time? This is true of none ; and if not so for a single year, then most certainly not for that longer term which measures our sojourn on earth. The truth is, we are constantly changing. Every moment, like every year, leaves its mark behind it. Though the foot of time fall ever so noiselessly upon our path, still the impress is there ; and it is well to remember that it is not so much by sudden and startling phenomena as by the continued succession of little events, that great results are accomplished in the bosom of our existence. We are apt to be insensible to the amazingly productive power of these little changes. They are so regular in their occurrence, multitudes of them so much unnoticed at the moment, and some of them so entirely beyond our control, and without our agency, that it is only by collecting the results into an aggregate that we become the affected observers of what has transpired. To-day is like yesterday ; yesterday is like its predecessor ; and a day is such a common article, that, except by a special effort, we fail to notice the progress of our years, or the vastly important impress which it leaves upon our being. Could we, however, retrace our steps, and give back to each moment what it gave to us, detaching the effect from ourselves, and reinstating it in the bosom of its cause ; could we then assemble these fleeting moments, each loaded with some relic of our history, and labeled with its peculiar contribution to our present state ; perchance we might, by passing the eye up and down the group, form some idea of "the times" which have passed over us,—of the multitudinous agencies at work within us and upon us, ever repeating their own action, and adding some new item to the texture and fashion of our progressive life. Such a vision, could it be taken, would make us almost doubtful of our own identity. Change, change, nothing but change, would salute the eye from all points of the mental horizon. It is marvellous that man can be so wonderfully altered in the course of a few years ; and yet remain essentially the same being. It is marvellous that such a varied series of events can be crowded into so small a compass. Truly, man is "fearfully and wonderfully made," bearing the signature of God in his endowments, and containing the elements of a great destiny in their history.

This general statement of life's changing current, will perhaps address our minds with more power, if we pause to observe some of the particulars which it embraces. To these let me then invite your attention.

I. Time makes a deep mark upon the body, the least important portion of our complex nature. This truth appears at a glance. Look into any

community ; and how readily we classify its members under certain denominations, which bear impressive testimony to the work of time. Here are those whom we call *infants*, just entered upon the scene of life, of all animated creatures the most helpless, and aside from the lessons of experience giving least promise for the future. They will not long retain their present condition. Coming into existence impressed with the law of development and growth, they will soon cease to be what they now are. Let time touch their susceptible nature, adding thereto the effects of its plastic hand, and they will be moulded into *children* ; the physical imbecilities of infancy will disappear, and these once helpless objects be ready for the sports and gambols of early life. Add a little more time, and they have passed on to the stature and comparative maturity of persons in the full prime and activity of ardent and hopeful youth. Subjoin another measure of time, and they are men and women in the strong and well developed vigor of completed manhood, having reached the acme of their physical being, and become ripe for the stern and laborious pursuits of life. Add another quantity of time, and the work of decay has begun its desolating ravages. The process once commenced, goes forward with increasing rapidity, till life becomes a burden, and the wearied frame at last drops into the dust under the accumulated infirmities of its own continuance. Hence, the difference between infancy and childhood, childhood and youth, youth and manhood, between the latter and old age, is simply a question of time. "The times" as they pass over us, create these wide and impressive variations in our physical condition. The particular point that we occupy in the series, is to be determined by the number of years that we have lived.

We are quite familiar with this succession of changes, so much so as perhaps hardly to give it a thought; and yet when we pause for reflection, we cannot fail to see a most solemn procession of events, steadily advancing in a line parallel with the progress of our years. The powers which "the times" give and mature, they take away : the edifice which they rear with such careful and prolonged agency, they demolish ; they develop and dissolve, ripen and blast, with equal certainty, bringing to perfection the very being they mean to destroy. The creature that goes up for a season, no sooner reaches the altitude than he begins to go down, increasing in the momentum till his grave opens and covers him from human sight. In both directions, the process is slow and silent; yet the effect keeps accumulating till it amounts to the total reality, which to the eye of thought is a most wonderful fact.

Nor should we forget that over our entire path from the first moment to the last, is always suspended the possibility of death. Comparatively few of our race pass through all the stages of life. What multitudes fall in infancy and early childhood! How thin the ranks of the aged by reason of early deaths ! That event, which "is the last of earth," is the liability of every moment. When it will come, to whom, and how, and where, is known only to Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being. Let us ever remember this impressive and solemn liability, as we proceed in the journey of life.

II. Equally marked is the effect of "the times" as they pass over us, upon our *intellectual* nature. We have minds as well as bodies, and by

their peculiar qualities are distinguished from the brute that perisheth, being fitted to rise far above the sphere of animal existence here, and destined to rise still higher hereafter. Man is an incarnate spirituality, mind and matter, the material and the spiritual, in intimate relation with each other. His body is but the casket, the tabernacle, the temporary home and convenience of the spirit, in which consists by far the largest part of his significance. When the one returns to the earth as it was, the other returns to the God who gave it.

The history of our purely intellectual nature from the commencement to the terminus of our present career, the changes to which it is subject, and the great advancement which it makes, are much more remarkable than the physical phenomena of our being. We are apt to note only the more striking developments of intelligence; and yet the mind of the commonest man, if we consider the point of its departure and the limited period of its expansion, is a wonder by the amount of its progress. Where did it begin? Where was it, and what was it, but a few years since? The little infant that you caress with so much fondness, knows almost nothing; it can neither appreciate your feelings, nor form the remotest idea of its own destiny as an intellectual being. What it is to be?—whence it came? and whither it is going?—these are questions that come not within the field of its thoughts. Judging from what it is in the outset, without reference to what we infer by the light of experience, we should never suppose the infant to be a miniature of the future man. The two as compared, present so many broad contrasts, and seem so vastly unlike, that but for experience we should not have the faintest conjecture that we were looking upon the same being, or that such a stupendous alteration upon the face of intelligence could be made in so short a time. The truth is that even a common man, having nothing to distinguish him from the crowd, and knowing about as much as his neighbors, and no more, is a rapidly developed giant, so much in advance of what he once was, as to have lost nearly every mark of intellectual identity. It is not possible for him to retrace his own history, and recount the millions of little operations by which his present condition is connected with his former one; yet nature and time have been steadily occupied in turning the infant into a man. Considering the brevity of the process, the utter destitution of knowledge with which it began, and then the actual progress made in the space of a few years, well may we be astonished at the spontaneous growth of the human intellect—that growth which the forces of nature necessitate almost without our effort. It indicates a species of immensity, compressed, and so to speak, laid up in the structure of man's soul.

We are, however, more likely to appreciate the contrast produced by the hand of time, when contemplating minds of remarkable qualities, highly gifted by nature, eminently favored by Providence, and intensely charged with the exciting stimulus of some commanding pursuit,—the three circumstances that ordinarily unite in the formation of a great man. Washington the infant, and Washington the hero and the statesman! Is it possible that we are looking upon the same person? We are. We can follow the man of so much historic grandeur down to the crude and undeveloped elements that lie slumbering in the bosom of a child, without a solitary indication of their wonderful future. All the striking contrasts

that we observe, have arisen from "the times" that have passed over the infant Washington. Observe a Newton in his cradle; and how unlike the same being, in a few short years expanded to the dimensions of the illustrious philosopher, and dazzling the world with the restless energies of thought! Who would have supposed that the infant, judged by the then existing appearances, could have ever handled orbs and marshalled suns, dashing off into the fields of immensity, defining and demonstrating the laws of the material universe? Have we the same being in the two cases? Exactly so. We can trace the philosopher back to his cradle, too ignorant to know even his mother, and too feeble to support his own frame. What capacities are there unseen, waiting for the successive changes of time and nature to unfold their glories! How broad the intellectual space between the infant Napoleon, sleeping in his mother's arms, and the same Napoleon charged with the terrible genius of war, and grasping the fate of empires in his hand! "The times" have passed over the former, and changed him into the latter.

Thus we see that time is the great interpreter of the human intellect, showing us what it is, for what God has made it, and to what it can attain. And if such vast changes may occur in so short time; if a being of apparently so little promise, may so soon acquire such mental magnitude; if there be that in man which admits of such a work in the limited period that lies between his first and last breath; ah! if these things be so, who then can compute his intellectual prospects for a boundless immortality? The facts, as we observe them on earth, are prophetic of an eminence, a vastness, a progress and acquisition of the future thinking being, that transcend all our efforts at measurement. The times as they pass over us, not only decipher the contents within us for present purposes; but equally point forward to what we shall be, when the hindrances of flesh and blood are laid aside in the grave. They reveal the glories of our intellectual constitution, demonstrating, upon the diagram of events, gifts that are fitted for an immortal range. We see the glimmerings of the future man, as we contemplate the history of the present one. We see capacities given that, in a proper development, may fulfil those precious promises with which the Bible makes eternity luminous, and heaven so attractive.

III. Not less striking or important is the stamp of time upon the history of our *sensibilities*. Man is neither all body, nor all intellect. What we call feeling, or sensibility, and that, too, under almost endless modifications, is as much a part of our nature as thinking. Who does not know what it is to have a feeling—to be thrilled with emotion, or burn with the ardor of restless desire? Who is not competent to distinguish such a state from one that is purely intellectual? Every man has science enough for so simple a task. Feeling is an original element of our existence.

In the outset of life, our sensibilities are almost wholly locked up; the emotions and desires, propensities and affections, dispositions and aversions, that are to be wrought into the structure of the future man, are hardly in the bud; and yet time, in the regulated order of nature, and by the appropriate objects, will bring all this subtle and sensitive mechanism into action, fashioning the man of *feelings* as well as of thoughts. The

susceptibility is the original gift of God; its laws come from the same source; but its development is the work of time. God made the mysterious harp, and gave to each string its peculiar note; but "the times," as they pass over us, are commissioned to awaken the music of our sentient nature.

It is doubtless true also, that the native susceptibilities of all men are the same; so that no one ever had a feeling which, in its *kind*, was absolutely peculiar to himself, and could not without a miracle have occurred in any mind but his own. This must be true, or there could be no science upon the subject applicable to the race. The same desires, the same emotions, the same native affections, the same classes of sensibility, and the same general laws of development, are the common inheritance of the species. In this respect what one mind is, that all minds are. Each is a pattern of the whole race. If you say that you have been happy, then let me assure you, that your neighbors also have been happy; and from experience know what the word means as well as you do. If you have been sorrowful, then remember that others are not strangers to the idea of sorrow. If strong desires have moved you to action, others have felt the same impulse. If hope has built her bower on your path, think not that you are not the only beings who have enjoyed the pleasures of hope. If you have been enraptured with the beauties of nature, so, too, have others relished the magic of the same power. The truth is, every essential and original feeling, which it is possible for any one to have, is the property of the race. What God has given to one, that he has given to all; and hence we are able to comprehend and verify the experience of others in the facts of our own.

Yet, though not in contradiction of the above statement, how wide a diversity in development and combination, marks the history of human feeling! How far is it from an even monotone! How variously the same heart has been exercised during the space of seventy years! Sometimes it has been swollen with bitter anguish, and at others leaping with joy; sometimes buoyant with hope, and at others jaded with disappointment; sometimes glowing with love, and perhaps at others fired with rage. Man would be a curious spectacle to himself, if he could daguerreotype upon his intelligence a perfect image of his own feelings, as they lie scattered here and there along the path of life—an image that should give all the hues and shadings of the total reality, blending each item with the whole, and yet leaving each so distinct as to be seen by itself. He would be astonished at the sight; and could hardly think himself the identical person who had passed through so many phases and multitudinous combinations of feeling, indeed that so many tunes could have been played in one heart. If we were to philosophize upon the image, and connect all its parts in the order of time and the relation of cause, and then trace back the fleeting succession to infancy, he would have a perfect solution of those settled and fixed conditions of the sensibility, by which he is now marked. He would see how one thing has arisen from another; and how the countless exercises of his sensitive nature, linked in a long series of related events, have finally ended in his present style of feeling. There is a very curious history spread along the path of one's life, and lying between the susceptibility given and the modification acquired. All we want, is eyes to see it; and could we perfectly see it,

we should know much more of ourselves, and better understand the reasons why we are what we are.

It is worthy of note, that the lapse of time produces *natural* changes of feeling; and hence childhood, youth, manhood, and age, are characterized, each by its peculiar tendency. No one of these periods can assume the exact type of the other. Nor should we forget that our sensibilities, lying, as they do, in the rear of the intellect, come forth in connection with the *objects* upon which the latter is fixed; and that they must of course vary with the character of those objects. Add the law of habit in his power to solidify feeling, to transform an occasional exercise into a permanent condition, and cut deeper and wider channels through the heart; and we have at least some clue to the philosophical geology of our sensibilities. We see how it is that men, with the same original stratum of feeling, the same elements and laws of sensibility, differ so widely in the secondary formations of the heart. Time, with its natural change, with its objects ever acting through the intellect, and its law of habit indelibly imprinted on the creature, is at the bottom of the whole process.

IV. The most important change connected with time, is the one that refers to our *moral* and *spiritual* state. If the body, the intellect, and sensibility bear testimony to the work of time, the same is impressively true in respect to moral character. As the times pass over us with whatever influences they bring, they make a deposit in every man's soul. No one has a given quantity of goodness or viciousness, which he retains permanently without any modification; he will soon have more or less of the same article. There is no absolute and unchanging *status* of human character, that defies the impression of all agency. Though in its kind a fixture, too much so to be radically changed in every twenty-four hours, it is nevertheless a growth, a steady and constantly accumulating acquisition, adding new elements of power, and new grades of progress. This is alike true of the good and the bad.

Providence places before your eye a man of very depraved and abandoned character. You are pained at the spectacle of his grossness and wickedness, and feel astonished that such baseness can find a home in any human heart. Could he twenty years ago have foreseen what he now is, he perhaps would have been as much astonished as you are. His present condition is not the work of a moment; he has gone down by degrees under the repeated applications of evil influence, each step preparing him to take a lower one, and all at last collecting themselves in the appalling result that now meets your eye. Thus the tender child and the disgusting monster are linked by the intermediate agencies, which convert the one into the other. By no possibility can the transition be made in a moment. Depravity in any and every form, under every type of expression and mode of indulgence, observes the law of growth; and hence it must be radically uprooted, and give place to a new species of moral life, or its ill-fated victim will be steadily travelling the downward road. Sin does not contain its own cure. He that committeth sin, is the servant of sin; and the longer he continues, the more absolutely fixed is his position. To disregard moral restraints, to set the laws of God at defiance, and sometimes the laws of men, becomes increasingly the habit of his life. No year passes over his head, and hardly any day, without adding to the

dire catalogue of causes, that are slowly but certainly working out his ruin. These causes are distributed in such small quantities, and then repeat their action so frequently, that they often prove fatal without being seen. They kill by the continued succession of little blows. No one seems to endanger life; yet each adds to the destructive power of every other, and all when put together, do the work. What multitudes of our race have lived to illustrate this gradual and progressive depravation of character, going down to deep darkness here, and sinking into endless night hereafter! He who is travelling this road, has an evil augury upon the face of his being, casting its portentous shadows upon the bosom of eternity. The process must be changed, or the times as they pass over him, will ere long place him beyond the reach of hope.

We have the same law in respect to the growth of virtue. A strong, solid, and matured state of moral excellence is the product of time. He, for example, who spent the year just closed in the service of God, seeking to conform his life and heart to the will of Heaven, has entered upon this year very differently furnished from what he would have been, had his course been the exact opposite. He retains for future use the good effects of past virtue. Let him spend the present year in the same way; and he will have made some advancement ere it closes. Let him spend all his remaining years in obedience to the will of God; and his last hours will give noble evidence to the growth of the Christian virtues in his heart. Every act of prayer, every exercise of faith, every instance of self-denial, every deed of love, all unite to swell the current of moral power, on which a good man is borne into heaven. The times as they pass over him, are ripening him for the skies. While depravity sinks, virtue rises with the progress of her years. She goes up, little by little, steadily, patiently, happy in the duties of each day, commencing and closing each year with God, till her earthly discipline is lost in the perfections and felicities of the endless life. Not so much by that which is striking and occasional, as by that which is constant and regular, does she fit herself to put on the robes of immortality. These little successions, like the particles of dust in composing the great globe, ultimately make the aggregate in the structure of a holy character. They require time for the display of their power; yet with the lapse of time they are steadily making their indelible mark. No sublimer spectacle can be found on earth, than that of a truly good man undergoing the culture of a gracious regimen, and then retiring to reap the rewards of a well spent life. Angels look with admiration upon the scene, and God with approval. The contrast with its moral opposite, is infinite.

V. Let me say finally, that our *social* and *relative* condition is subject to the constant mutations of time. God has wisely connected us together, interlacing all parts of our personal existence with social ties. Society, and not solitude, is the natural and appropriate state of man. And yet, how ever varying are the social aspects of one's life! Look into the family, and note the changes of time. To-day it is a family: you see all its members present—parents and children, brothers and sisters, living under the same roof, and fed at the same board. In a few years, it will be a family no longer; death will place half of its members, perhaps more, in the grave; the remainder, by providence, will be scattered to

the four winds of heaven. Ordinarily, this change does not occur with the violence of a sudden convulsion; it comes about by the steady action of time. Parents worn out in the journey of life, sink into their graves; while surviving children, separated from each other, and having entered into new relations, become practical strangers to the scenes of their childhood. There is the *homestead*, and around it gather a thousand touching memories; every hill and every valley, the trees, the fences, and the road, all seem like old acquaintances; yet, where is the family, that group of beings once so tenderly associated with you in every article of this scene? Ah! my hearers, where is it? It is *nowhere*. It has now no existence, as it then had; it is literally gone from the face of the earth. The times have passed over it, and swept it all away. It was the thing of but a transient moment, and with the lapse of that moment, it has fled forever. To one who has any tenderness of domestic feeling—who can avoid having it?—this is a most affecting change in his social condition. Though now a man, and perhaps not wishing to be a child again, still he cannot recall the past without moralizing upon life, and feeling the glow of peculiar sentiments in his heart.

If we look beyond the family, and study our relations to others in whom we may have had some interest, perhaps a very strong one, we are brought to the same result. What a changing thing that is, which we call the circle of our acquaintance! It is always a circle, and embraces a given number of beings; yet, the persons who compose it, do not long remain the same. Familiar faces are retiring, and strange ones taking their place; old friends are stepping out, and new ones stepping in. Deaths, removals, and sometimes the unhappy misunderstandings of life, keep our social existence in the state of constant fluctuation. Not a year elapses without leaving its distinct impress; and when we put together a number of years, the effect is solemnly visible. Where are the companions of one's boyhood, those whom he loved to meet, and with whom he sported in the season of youth? Where are the associates of his riper years, those with whom he once mingled in the walks of business? What has become of the former friends and acquaintance of the man who is now threescore years and ten? Nearly all of them have disappeared; some of them are among the dead, and the others are scattered up and down the earth. Change, steady, constant, and unintermitted change, is continually passing over the face of what we call the social circle. It is always in motion. And but for our capacity to transfer our affections to new objects, and become interested in those with whom we are familiar; but for that general feeling of humanity, which agreeable contact may speedily ripen into friendship, we should suffer most seriously from this incessant variableness of our social existence.

So also the *fortunes* of life, as wrought out in the bosom of society, to a great extent observe the same law. Even the most successful man has his zenith, towards which he gradually ascends; and then from which as gradually descends into the vale of years, the decrepitude of age, and finally the silence of the tomb. The skilful merchant cannot keep trading always; or the able lawyer pleading always; or the distinguished statesman always commanding a nation's ear. They will at length work themselves out; and having had their day, however prosperous or brilliant, they reach the point at which they must disappear, and give place to

others. They withdraw from the active crowd; their names cease to be mentioned, and soon their position among men, with all its bustle and importance, lies in the sepulchre of extinct humanity. And besides this natural course of events, there are in the lives of many men severe reverses—hard, trying, and disastrous crises of existence. Their calculations fail them; perhaps, supposed friends betray them; possibly their own prodigality or folly has ruined them; the times pass over them, and what they once were, they are no longer, having suffered the severest disappointment where perchance they expected the greatest success. They have occasion to learn by sore experience, that this is a very changing world, and that the fortune which smiles to-day, may withhold its smile to-morrow. One would think, that all men, by contemplating the contingencies of life, especially those terrible side flaws to which we are constantly exposed, might become sufficiently wise to seek a higher and more lasting good than it is the province of earth to give. All temporal values are too uncertain to merit the supreme attachments of the soul. The family decays; the circle of our acquaintance is ever changing; our fortunes in life sweep through the widest variations, sometimes shocking us with volcanic power, and always advancing to a final terminus; every worldly good has its date and its doom; and shall we not, then, seek something which the hand of time cannot disturb? This would seem to be wise.

These, my brethren, are the thoughts with which I meet you on this first sabbath of the new year. The change, the constant change of body, intellect, sensibility, character, and social condition, as the years roll by us, is a theme pertinent to the hour. We surely have more to do with time, than simply to measure it. Its effects upon us form the interesting question. Let us bear in mind, that these effects do not lie mainly in striking and long remembered incidents, that occur but occasionally; they are far more dependent upon causes that never tire, too regular to be spasmodic, and often so familiar as to pass unnoticed. Our own continued existence forms the unbroken line, along which these causes accumulate and transmit their power. As long as we live, their effects must live, pursuing us to whatever world we may go, and in whatever circumstances placed.

What, then, are we this morning, as the result of those changes, to which we have been subject during the pilgrimage of life? We are not by any means what we were when we began to breathe; nor shall we long remain what we now are. Though time destroys not our essential identity of body or spirit, it is nevertheless with every beating pulse making its mark upon our existence. Such has been our history in the past; and such it must be in the future, onward to that solemn moment when our connection with earth will come to a close. Our rapidly receding years are lessening the space between the present and the mortal hour; and soon that time will come, which to us will be the end of time. The never dying principle of mental existence, with its enduring character, having passed the period of its earthly discipline and received its immortal stamp, is the only thing that will survive the strange, mysterious, awful shock of death—the last and the greatest of the changes which Heaven has assigned to our lot. This will live in another world, all life, all thought, all bliss or woe, when the body that once contained and impri-

soned it, shall be taking its long sleep in the bosom of its mother-earth. Tell me, then, hearer, what is to be the effect of time upon your SOUL—the real and imperishable being within you that decay cannot reach, and whose longevity even eternity cannot exhaust? Will it rear a moral pyramid of blessings whose lofty summit shall be bathed in heavenly light, gilding and glorifying your existence, through ages of such amazing remoteness as to defy calculation, and bewilder thought? Or will it consign you to that world of sorrows where hope is unknown, and happiness an eternal stranger? These questions should come home with thrilling consequence; and I am persuaded, that you cannot better employ the opening hours of this year, than in seeking an answer. Suppose you spend the remainder of life substantially as you have spent the last year, what, then, will be the issue in eternity? Are you a Christian? Have you made God your friend, and sought his favor according to the plan of his gospel? If not, you do well to see where you are, to take counsel at the bar of truth, and flee for grace to the Christian altar, ere you are doomed beyond the reach of effort or the call of mercy. May God so teach us to number our days, that we shall apply our hearts unto wisdom.

HYMN.

By cool Siloam's shady rill
How sweet the lily grows;
How sweet the breath, beneath the hill,
Of Sharon's dewy rose!

Lo! such the child, whose early feet
The paths of peace have trod,
Whose secret heart, with influence sweet,
Is upward drawn to God.

By cool Siloam's shady rill
The lily must decay;
The rose that blooms beneath the hill,
Must shortly fade away.

And soon, too soon, the wintry hour
Of man's maturer age,
Will shake the soul with sorrow's power,
And stormy passions rage.

O Thou who givest life and breath,
We seek thy grace alone,
In childhood, manhood, age, and death,
To keep us still thine own.

—HEBER.

SERMON DCXLI.

BY REV. W. S. TYLER,

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CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN.

"For our conversation is in Heaven."—PHIL. iii. 20.

THE word rendered conversation in this passage properly denotes, not what we commonly express by conversation, social intercourse, nor exactly what the word meant in the age of Elizabeth and James, habitual conduct and manner of life. Its primary signification is citizenship. It expresses the relation of a citizen to his native country—to the commonwealth of his love and choice. It is radically the same with that which Aristotle and Plato used to designate their Model State, and also with that which the Apostle Paul employs, when he speaks of "the commonwealth of Israel." The commonwealth of true Israelites and the commonwealth of true Christians are one and the same. There is a republic more spiritual than that of Plato, better arranged and better governed than that of Aristotle, wiser than the community of philosophers; conversant with higher themes and sustaining more honorable relations, than the republic of letters. And it is not, like the imaginary republics of ancient philosophers, merely an idea, a fancy, a dream, an utopia without any real or possible existence. We can point it out in actual being. We can show, where its territory lies, and what is its capital, and who is its chief magistrate, and who its citizens, and what are its laws, and what its aim and end and future destiny. And when we have done so, we shall endeavor to impress on our own hearts and on the hearts of our hearers, the practical conviction, that it is a question of paramount concern to us, what are our obligations and relations to this great commonwealth.

I. Touching the locality of this republic, or the seat of government, we have the declaration of our text, that it is in heaven.

Its dominions, in the broadest sense, is the universe. This and all worlds belong to the Sovereign of the State, and he has given them to his people. The earth is the Lord's, and he has given it to his saints. The heavens are his and all their countless hosts. The stars are his, for he made them and peopled them with all their bird and happy inhabitants. Some of the angels rebelled against his government, but they wrested from him none of his territory. They were cast out of heaven, and hell is but the prison in which he keeps them against the day of judgment. Mankind, also, have disobeyed his commands and set up a government for themselves. But this abomination of a portion of his dominions, if such it may be called, is only temporary—only apparent. The earth is still his, and it shall be the inheritance of his children—the possession of his saints. But that peculiar country—that about which cluster all the

hallowed associations of citizenship, and home and native land—is in heaven. We know little of it. We only know that it is a goodly land, a better country than the most salubrious, and fertile, and beautiful, of all on the face of the earth. It is the heavenly Canaan, and in comparison with it, the earthly Canaan, that land of the olive and the vine, the palm tree and the cedar—that land of fountains and of streams of water, of rich fields and fat pastures, flowing with milk and honey, is but a barren desert. And the capital is the new Jerusalem, built on Mount Zion above, whose walls are of precious stones, and the gates pearls, and the streets pure gold. And with all the magnificence of a city beautiful and glorious beyond compare, it unites all the attractions of a rural scenery, such as never delighted the eye of mortal here below. In the midst of the golden streets flows the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal; and on either side of the river, grows the tree of life in long succession, with all its rich variety of form and fruit and foliage; beautiful to look upon, refreshing to sit beneath, its fruit immortality, and its very leaves for the healing of the nations. There is no temple in it. The city, the country, is all sacred with the presence of God, and that *presence* is the temple, where God is worshipped, not at a distance, not through forms and ordinances, and outward means; not in the costliest structure human hands can rear, nor even in that magnificent cathedral, lighted with suns and stars, which is his own handiwork, but in himself—himself a wall of fire round about, himself a light and glory in the midst. And there is no sea there—no barren surface, no pathless deep, no stormy wave, no restless heaving bosom; but all the soil is fruitful and all the air is peace. And there is no night there; they no longer need it for sleep, for there labor is rest, and activity, repose. They no longer need it, as we do here, to reveal to them those worlds of light, which darkness shows us, but which are never seen by day; for there darkness is not the appointed precursor of light, nor evil the necessary means of a greater good. And the city has no need of lamps to light it, nor of the sun or moon to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the gates are never shut, and yet there never enters it anything that defileth. For the whole country around is the paradise of God—a paradise of purity and beauty, of health and happiness, in comparison with which, all the real and all the fabled paradises of oriental wealth, and power, and splendor, deserve not to be named; and even the garden of man's primeval innocence and bliss is but a faint type and shadow of the celestial Eden.

II. The head of this commonwealth, or the Sovereign of this kingdom (for while in one view it is a republic, in another it is more properly a kingdom) is God, the almighty maker, proprietor and ruler of the universe, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who to an intrinsic and inalienable right to reign over all his creatures, adds every possible qualification of a perfect moral Governor—omniscience to discern all their wants, omnipresence to be with them at all times and places, omnipotence to supply all their necessities, infinite goodness that desires the virtue and happiness of every creature; inflexible justice that will not at all acquit the guilty; such unspotted holiness, as turns with unspeakable abhorrence from the least sin, and yet such unbounded love and mercy as welcomes back

the returned prodigal, and rejoices over him as a lost child found, as a son that was dead made alive.

The government over this revolted province of his dominions is administered chiefly by his Son, who possesses some peculiar adaptations and wonderful qualifications for this office. Originally divine and equal with the Father, he became human and placed himself on a level with man, that he might be a mediator betwixt God and man, and lay his hands upon them both. He honored the broken law of God by suffering its penalty in his own person. He redeemed the lost race of man by dying in their stead. And now, having risen from the dead, he lives and reigns, head over all things, at once for the glory of his Father, and the salvation of his people, ever uniting in himself every divine attribute with every human sympathy and experience.

Nor shall we have comprehended the whole economy of this government in its marvellous adaptation to human necessities, till we bring into view a third agent, who comes still nearer to the hearts of men and yet sustains the same intimate and indissoluble union with the Father. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to communicate to men the rights and privileges of citizenship; to instruct them also in their relations and duties; to adopt them into the Christian Commonwealth, and give them the spirit of adoption; to write the laws on their hearts and dispose them to obedience; in a word, to perform all the most spiritual functions of government, and rule within them on earth, as the Father reigns over them in heaven, and the Son governs for them, at once their representative and their ruler, at the Father's right hand.

III. The citizens are all holy beings throughout the universe. There is first the innumerable company of angels, the messengers of God's will, the ministers of his power, the armies that fight his battles and maintain his government, the thrones, and dominions, and principalities and powers, that encircle his throne and cast their crowns at his feet. Then there is the general assembly and church of the first born and the spirits of the just made perfect in heaven, the long line of patriarchs and prophets and apostles, the noble army of the martyrs, the sacramental host of the Lord's anointed of every age, the wise and good of all the dead selected and gathered out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. All these dwell on Mt. Zion, in the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. Then there are the choicest spirits on earth, all true believers of every clime, all spiritual Christians of whatever denomination, all who have repented of sin and washed it away in atoning blood, all the followers of Christ and the friends of God, of whatever age or sex, creed or condition in life. Moreover, there is good reason to believe, though we cannot know, that there are myriads of other worlds peopled by myriads of myriads of holy beings, all of whom belong to this vast kingdom of God, and Commonwealth of saints.

IV. It follows from the foregoing, that the only right or title to citizenship in this Commonwealth is holiness. Nothing unholy or impure can ever enter the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord. Citizenship is therefore the *birthright* of angels. They were born or created holy, and therefore born citizens. Some of

them, however, kept not their first estate. Aspiring to be Gods, they fell from the felicities of angels. Ambitious of power and pre-eminence, they lost even the equal rights and privileges of citizens.

Citizenship was also the birthright of Adam, and he would have bequeathed it to his posterity; but he disobeyed the divine command, sold his birthright for the forbidden fruit, and involved all his offspring in the dreadful forfeiture. What was lost, however, in the first Adam, was recovered by the second: when the Lord Jesus Christ undertook for us, he redeemed the forfeited blessing, and gave power to as many as believed on him to become the sons of God, and heirs of heaven. United to him by faith, born again of his Spirit, the Christian is a new creature and another man, subject to none of the forfeitures incurred by the first father of mankind, and entitled to all the immunities purchased by the Head of the church. Neither is there any other way for sinful men to attain to these high privileges. No forms and ceremonies, no works of righteousness which they can do, can expiate the broken law, or regain the lost prize. "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." "Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God." No rank of birth, no post of power, no height of fame, no attainment of knowledge can introduce him into the Commonwealth of Israel. He must be "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

But this way is open to all. The prize is placed within the reach of every son and daughter of Adam. The richest cannot buy it, but the poorest may receive it as a free and unmerited gift. The proudest monarch must be born again, before he can enter into the kingdom of heaven; and the humblest peasant may enter on the same condition. None is too guilty and defiled to be cleansed by the washing of regeneration: and none is pure enough without justification by faith in Jesus Christ, and sanctification by the Holy Ghost. Unlike any other Republic, the Commonwealth of the faithful makes character the only basis of citizenship, and allows of no other distinction. Age, sex, rank, fortune, forms, features, outward badges, external relations are nothing; while repentance, faith, love, holiness, the state of the heart, the moral and religious character—these are everything. Whoever will, may become a citizen in this great Commonwealth, on the single condition that he will begin and continue to lead a holy life.

V. The government is of course monarchical. It must be so. There is but one being, who has the power or the right to govern the universe: and if all power is concentrated in the hands of one, it is simply because all right and all excellence reside in the same. None but he who created the world can sustain and govern it. A universal kingdom must have an omnipresent king. A universal law demands an omniscient lawgiver and judge. A government of perfect justice and holiness, wisdom and goodness, can be administered only by a Being infinite in every perfection. The happiness, the safety, the very existence of his creatures, not less than his own glory, is suspended on God's absolute, unchangeable and eternal dominion over all the works of his hands. His abdication would involve their ruin. His dethronement would pull down the pillars of the moral, as well as the material universe. Infinitely exalted above all his crea-

tures, he *must* rule over all, and take counsel of none. He can neither be resisted nor aided in his plans. He is alike incapable of doing wrong himself, and of countenancing it in others. "He cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man." His is the only monarchy in existence, which realizes the proper idea of a monarchy, as it was conceived by the greatest political philosopher of antiquity. Democracy, says Aristotle, is the government for a people who all stand on a common level as to intellectual and moral worth. A state in which the aggregate of intelligence and virtue resides principally in a few families, is fitted to be an aristocracy. And on the same principle, a monarchy is theoretically just and proper only, where one man or one family surpasses the combined talent, learning, and excellence of the nation. It need not be said, that this demand is answered fully, and infinitely more than answered in the government of God, and nowhere else. He is infinitely wiser, better, greater than all the subjects of his government throughout the universe which he has made. There is in him a greater aggregate, not only of excellence, but of being and blessedness. His existence and happiness are worth more, of more intrinsic value than the sum-total of created existence and happiness. Add to this the consideration, that the existence and happiness of his creatures are inseparably bound up in his; and it becomes not more a matter of necessity and right, than it is a thing to be coveted and desired, that he should be sole monarch alike in the kingdoms of nature, of providence and of grace.

VI. Yet it is a constitutional monarchy; a government of law. Precluded by his own all-perfect nature from error and wrong-doing, God has further limited himself, if I may so speak, by giving to mankind a written revelation of his plans of wisdom and his purposes of mercy to our world. Or, rather this revelation, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is a transcript of those limitations, which his own eternal and unchangeable perfections prescribe for all his actions. This Bill of Rights and Statute-book of duties, he will never contravene nor annul. Comply with the terms, and all his promises will be fulfilled. Disregard his threatenings, and sooner or later the threatened vengeance will surely overtake you. Obey, and live: disobey, and die. Believe, and be saved: disbelieve, and be damned. These are the alternatives—and they are fixed as the foundations of the earth—unchangeable as the order of the heavens. He will never depart from them himself, nor will he suffer his creatures to do so with impunity. He will abide by the constitution and laws himself, and he will never suffer them to be infringed by his creatures.

VII. When we direct our attention to the mutual relations of the citizens in this Commonwealth, we find that they are all on a footing of perfect equality. In this view it is indeed a Commonwealth, a Republic, the most perfect on earth, and in fact the source and pattern of all other well regulated republics. It admits of no hereditary, no artificial distinctions. It recognizes no superiority but that of moral excellence: no dignity but that of office, and this only by the choice and with the sanction of the people. "Ye know," says our Lord, to the model community of his disciples—"Ye know, that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great, exercise authority upon them—

but it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. But he that is greatest among you, shall be your servant." In the Christian community, there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free, male nor female; but all are one in Christ Jesus. The pious slave is the Lord's freeman; the Christian prince or chief magistrate, is the Lord's servant. The pastor is but a minister *in* office, and out of the discharge of his official duties, nothing above any other Christian. On the other hand, every Christian is a priest to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable through Jesus Christ. There are no kings and no priests in the Christian Commonwealth; or rather all are kings and all priests—a royal priesthood, combining those highest and most sacred functions even here, and destined to be kings and priests unto God and the Lamb, and reign with him forever and ever.

VIII. Moreover, though the government is an absolute monarchy, yet the people enjoy the most perfect freedom. Though God reigns by intrinsic and inalienable right, yet he is the king of every citizen's choice. He reigns, not more, not so much over their persons and concerns, as in their hearts; and it is their will and pleasure that he should rule both in and over them with supreme, unbounded sway. His will is theirs; and nothing can befall them, nothing can transpire around them, that does not on the whole please them, because it pleases Him. Nor is it external liberty alone that they enjoy: just so far as they are holy, they possess spiritual liberty—moral freedom, freedom of the will; freedom to choose what reason dictates and conscience commands; the free play of all the faculties, each in its appropriate sphere; the spontaneous outgoing and action of the whole man in accordance with the laws of his being, for his being's end and aim. Oh, that is true liberty, and all else is bondage. Whom Christ maketh free, he is free indeed, and other men are slaves.

IX. The end of all good government, is the honor of the government and the well-being of the governed; and such is the end of God's government both in the church and the world; both on earth and in heaven. Though infinitely exalted above his creatures, yet he has linked his glory with their holiness and happiness. He seeks his glory *in* their holiness and happiness, and they can find holiness and happiness only in beholding, exhibiting, and promoting *his* glory. In his immutable purpose, in the very nature of things, as he has constituted them, these ends are one and indivisible. They advance or recede—they stand or fall together. Nay, they *never* recede in reality; whatever may be the appearance to human view, they are always advancing steadfastly and irresistibly to their glorious consummation. They will *not* fall, but will stand firm and immovable, when the heavens and the earth, and all else that *can* be shaken—shall have passed away. For who can resist the government, and prevent it from attaining its ends? Who can elude omniscience, or baffle omnipotence? And how can infinite goodness, guided by infinite wisdom, fail to secure the best ends by the use of the fittest means? Individuals may be lost, but the universe will be saved. Justice may demand the punishment of a part, but wisdom and goodness will overrule that very punish-

ment for the benefit of the whole. The incorrigibly wicked must perish, but all who confess and forsake their sins will find mercy, and will be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Not one true believer will be overlooked or suffered to perish. Every one has the promise and the pledge of Him who cannot lie, that all things shall work together for his good on earth. And he will at length gather all the Commonwealth of the faithful—the holy of all ages and all nations, of all provinces and all worlds throughout his universal empire, around his throne in heaven, where they will see their holiness and happiness secured, His character and glory without a stain, and all the ends of His government consummated in the everlasting communion of the holy and happy universe, with their more holy and happy Creator. "Father," says the Son of God, in that intercessory prayer, which cannot fail of its full accomplishment—"Father, I will, that they whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory, which I had with thee before the world was." He has gone to prepare a place for them in his Father's house, "where are many mansions:" And when they have overcome in their earthly conflicts, they will "sit down with him in his throne, even as he also overcame, and sat down with his Father in his throne."

Our subject so abounds in practical inferences and applications, that we can do little more than state them in their connection with what has already been said, and then leave them to make their own impression on your hearts.

1. How great are the honors and privileges of citizenship in such a Commonwealth as we have so imperfectly described—such a *country*, even a heavenly,—such a *city*, which hath foundations—whose builder and maker is God. Such a sovereign, the blessed and only Potentate, the King eternal, immortal, invisible; the only wise, the only good; the Almighty. Such citizens, all the wise and good spirits of earth—all the saints and angels in heaven—all the holy and happy throughout the universe! Holiness, the only title to citizenship—holy love, the common bond of union to each other and to their King! The most implicit obedience, united with the most perfect freedom! An absolute monarchy, where one alone has the right, the power, or the wish to reign, meeting and blending with a pure republic, in which liberty, equality, and fraternity—the mere dream of earthly republics, are fully realized. A government administered by perfect sovereignty, and yet according to just and equal laws, and harmonizing, nay, identifying those usually irreconcilable interests—the honors and prerogatives of the sovereign, with the rights and privileges of the people, establishing both on a common immutable basis; securing both with infallible certainty, and to eternal ages. Who would not belong to such a Commonwealth? Who would not be a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God? Who, when the terms of admission are so easy and practicable to all; when the gates are thrown so widely open, who will consent to remain an alien from the Commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger to the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world? Let others boast of their Roman or American citizenship, but ever be it our exultation that our citizenship is in heaven.

2. But in connection with the honors and privileges, we must not forget the duties and responsibilities of citizens. Rights and duties are ever correlative. Privileges and responsibilities, like favors and obligations, must always be commensurate. Are we free? Then are we also responsible. Have we received freely? Freely should we also give. Have we been entrusted with much? Then we have much for which we must give account. Oh, what a trust is ours! The interests of such a kingdom! The honor of such a King! The edification of the church! The conversion of the world! The salvation of men! The glory of God! Who is sufficient for these things? No mortal of himself. But there is no insufficiency in God! Jesus Christ strengthening us, we can do all things. The responsibility is with us, the strength with Him. Duties are ours, results are His—and His will be the glory.

To enter a little more particularly into the duties that grow out of this relation, I observe:

3. Is our citizenship in heaven? Then we must be a peculiar people. Every nation on earth has its distinctive features—its physiognomy, costume, language, laws, manners, customs, genius, spirit, are all more or less peculiar. How much more a Commonwealth whose seat and centre is in heaven? whose citizens are born by a new, celestial birth? How strange, if such a people should not have a face radiant with heavenly light, shining like that of Moses when he came down from the mount of God; a language which others cannot speak or even understand—laws written on their hearts, of more than human wisdom and love—manners of unearthly attractiveness—customs with which the stranger intermeddleth not—a genius and spirit that savors less of earth than heaven. And they *have*. You may not have eyes to see it. You may mistake the men. Many who bear the name, may not belong to the number of the faithful. But there *are* those in whom the blindest must see it—the most perverse must acknowledge it. God and their Christian brethren may discover more or less of the distinctive features and spirit in others. All true believers develop it more and more clearly in this world, and will manifest it perfectly in heaven. And they who profess to be citizens of the Commonwealth of Israel, and yet cannot be distinguished from the surrounding Gentiles—those who profess to be Christians and have their conversation in heaven, while they live just like men of the world, only deceive themselves, and expose themselves to the contempt of others; for true Christians *must* be a peculiar people.

4. Is our citizenship in heaven? Then we are but strangers and pilgrims here, and should live as such. We are not of the world, and it ill becomes us to set our affections on worldly things. We belong to a better country. We are citizens of no mean city—we were born there—thither we are destined soon to return. There is our capital and there our King. There is our Father, and there our home.

> "There our best friends—our kindred dwell,
> There God, our Saviour, reigns."

Our treasure is there: yes, and our hearts are there also. And shall we

sell our heavenly birthright for an earthly inheritance? Shall we renounce our citizenship in heaven, and seek a country on earth? Shall we build our house beneath the skies, and think no more of home, our Father's house,—a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? No, we are children of a King. We are heirs to a kingdom and an inheritance that is incorruptible. And we will trample under foot these meaner things, and set our faces, turn our thoughts, lift our affections upwards. Our minority will soon be over, our education soon complete, and then our Elder Brother will come for us, and take us to our Father's house. Then we shall be installed and crowned. And we will live waiting for his glorious appearing—looking for, and hasting unto the blessed hope.

5. Is our citizenship in heaven? Then we should keep under our bodies and mortify our members which are upon the earth, and cherish only the better part, the spiritual nature, which will be the chief seat and source of our happiness in heaven. I bring out this topic distinctly by itself, though nearly related to the last, because it is precisely the topic on which the Apostle is chiefly insisting in the context. "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an example. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. For our conversation (our commonwealth, our citizenship) is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." This vile body must be changed, spiritualized, fashioned like Christ's glorified body, before it can enter heaven. Why then waste your time and talents and substance in adorning it, in feeding it, in pampering its appetites and passions, in nursing the flesh into a more delicate morsel for worms, and only making it more unfit for heaven—nay, perhaps making it the everlasting clog and prison of your soul, that shall sink it to a lower place in perdition?

6. Is our citizenship in heaven? Then we should love one another. This is the duty of all good citizens. It is especially the duty and the privilege of fellow-citizens in a foreign land—and most of all in an enemy's country. How delightful to meet a countryman in foreign travel! How welcome is the very sight of his person, clad in the national costume! How pleasant to scan the familiar features of the national physiognomy in his face! How refreshing to hear the sound of his voice, to drink in once more those familiar words and those characteristic tones, that speak of home and native land, to learn from him the latest news, to talk over with him the state and prospects of a beloved, though distant country, and if possible, to cast in our lot with his and prosecute our journey together, till we arrive at the city which gave us birth! And how intimate and endearing is the tie that unites natives of the same country, in a temporary *residence* abroad! They may be personally unacquainted. They may never have seen or heard of each other before. They may have no common interests or pursuits. They may be united by no other tie.

Enough that they are countrymen. This is a sufficient introduction to an acquaintance—this is a sufficient bond of union. They meet to give and receive intelligence from home. They converse about the past history and the present state of the fatherland. They dwell on the pleasant places, the goodly heritage, the sacred associations, the hallowed recollections, the familiar scenes from which they are exiled for a season, refreshing each other's memories, stirring each other's affections, till their hearts are all on fire with one passion, all melted into one desire; and that is the desire of returning home. Let them be shut up in an *enemy's* country, immured in the walls of a prison, or condemned to hard labor in the mines, if permitted to meet a few moments every evening, or an hour every week, how would they rush into each other's arms and cling to each other's embrace! With what intense interest would they inquire after each other's state and ask for news of the progress of the war, and mingle their tears of sorrow or of joy at the successes or the reverses of their country's arms, and bow their faces together before the God of battles—their fathers' God—that he would speed the right and soon bring the struggle to a triumphant issue. And when separated, how would they long and wait for the return of another of those weekly seasons of sweet communion and fervent prayer! Christian, hast thou a country beyond the swelling flood, all dressed in living green? Hast thou a city above the skies, whose walls are salvation and her gates praise! And does it not gladden thy inmost heart to fall in with a fellow traveler through the world, who speaks the same language, who loves the same country, and serves the same king, who brings thee tidings from home, and who will accompany thee in more or less of the remainder of thy journey! Art thou a sojourner in a strange land, and wilt thou not press a countryman to thy bosom? art thou a captive and a prisoner in an *enemy's* country, and wilt thou not delight to meet thy fellow captives at every possible opportunity, and pour out thy whole soul in unison with them, in good wishes and earnest prayers for the common country's cause? Ah, brethren, if we entered into the spirit of our relations, as citizens of the celestial city, and yet strangers and pilgrims for a season on earth, should we not love one another more? Would any tie whatever, which might bind us, however closely, to any citizens of the world, be so close and so tender, as that which unites us to each other?

7. Is our citizenship in heaven? Then it becomes us to love our country and our king. With such a country, patriotism is piety. With such a king, loyalty is devotion. To live for them is the highest virtue and the most sacred duty. To die for them is the greatest privilege and the truest glory. Here patriotism and philanthropy, liberty and religion, all meet, and call at once for their heroes and their martyrs; offer at once the cross and the crown. Christian, no mortal ever stood in such lofty relations—none was ever invited to so sublime a service as thyself. The representative of no ordinary country, the soldier of no earthly prince, conduct yourself as a citizen worthy of your high calling; illustrate the Commonwealth of believers in the eyes of the world; fight manfully the good fight of faith; bear ever with you the commission of the King of kings, and spread far and near the triumphs of his Kingdom among the nations of the earth.

But last of all and most of all, for it 'is our greatest personal concern, let us weigh well, each one for himself, the import of that question which we have so often repeated with our lips: *Is* our citizenship in heaven? *Are* we—are *we* fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God? That is the great question. No matter how glorious the kingdom, if we do not belong to it. No matter how great and good the king, if he is not *our* king; if he does not reign in our hearts, it is nothing to us. And it would seem, that this question might be easily settled; if we did not know that so many had been deceived. Have we been born again, created anew unto good works? Have we repented of sin and forsaken it—renounced the world and given ourselves away to God through Jesus Christ? Do we trust in the righteousness of Christ alone for acceptance? Have we any personal holiness, as the fruit and proof of the indwelling Spirit? Are we a peculiar people, as diffirent from the rest of mankind, as heaven is from earth? Do we feel and act like strangers and pilgrims here below, ever looking, longing, journeying, hasting towards a better country? Do we mortify our bodies? Are we dead to the world and the flesh? Do we love one another as Christians? Do we live for the honor of God and the interests of his Kingdom, being comparatively dead to self and every other object? Are our hearts in heaven? Is our conversation there?

HYMN.

Our country is Immanuel's ground,
We seek that promised soil:
The songs of Zion cheer our hearts,
While strangers here we toil.

Oft do our eyes with joy o'erflow,
And oft are bathed in tears;
Yet nought but heaven our hopes can raise,
And nought but sin our fears.

The flowers that spring along the road
We scarcely stoop to pluck;
We walk o'er beds of shining ore,
Nor waste one wishful look.

We tread the path our Master trod,
We bear the cross he bore;
And every thorn that wounds our feet,
His temples pierced before.

—Barbauld.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

Varied and expressive are the titles under which the Saviour is pleased to present himself, to win the regard of those whom he came to save. He took upon himself the form of a servant when he assumed our nature, and he is willing to take upon himself any name, however humble, that will express his character and the offices he has come to perform. "I am the door," saith the Saviour, when he would show himself *the way* by which sinners may enter into life—into the mansions which are prepared for them that love God. "I am the *vine*," saith the Saviour, when he would illustrate the union of the branches, the members of his body, *believers* with himself. They partake of the root and the fatness of the vine, and the streams of life flow to them through him.

"*I am the good shepherd!*" Mark the tenderness of the expression—the *good* shepherd! In other passages than this the same figure is employed to express the peculiar care which the Lord Jesus feels and exercises for his people; but here it is announced with special strength, as if the Saviour would assure his disciples that he is theirs to the sacrifice of himself for their sake. "The good shepherd," saith he, "giveth his life for the sheep." In the eastern world the force of this passage is doubtless more clearly seen than here. We do not appreciate the feelings of the shepherd to his flock. *There*, it is true, that a shepherd often knows the countenance of each sheep, though he may have a vast flock under his care. He gives names to each one of them, and they all *know* their names, and come at his call, and eat from his hand, and follow him whithersoever he goeth. In danger they fly to him for protection, and feel safe when near to him, to be guarded from the invader; and he is ready to defend them as he would be to guard his own fireside from the assault of a ruthless foe. He takes tender care of the little ones. He nurses the feeble; he lays the lambs in his bosom. This is often seen: a shepherd coming home with a lamb in his arms—a lamb that requires more tender nursing than it could receive on the mountains; and the good shepherd would watch it and care for it, as if it were a child of his. A stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers; but the voice of their own shepherd they know, and when he speaks they hear, as if a father's voice was in the air.

Now this is a most apt and beautiful figure of Christ. It almost ceases to be a figure and becomes a sweet reality, when we think of the exceeding force of the illustration. Christ is a shepherd in his watchfulness over his people. "I am the good shepherd and know my sheep, and am known of mine." It is sweet for us to feel that we are of his flock—that he has chosen us for his own—gathered us into his fold—set his mark upon us, and trained us to know and follow, obey and enjoy him. He is good. There is no doubt of it. He shows it daily, hourly, every moment. He saw us wandering on the mountains; he came to seek and save the lost, and he found us ready to perish. He took us in his arms; he laid us in his bosom; he brought us home to himself, and nurtured us with more than parental love and care.

He is the good shepherd in guarding us from danger. Our enemies are many and mighty, and their wiles are so deceitful, that we should fall

into the snares and perish, if the same grace that rescued us did not preserve us by the way.

He *feeds* his sheep! The finest of the wheat he has prepared for them. He calls them to his storehouse, and throws its doors wide open for them to enter and be filled. "He brought me into his banqueting house and his banner over me was love." He gives them to drink of the rivers of waters that flow from the fountain of his exhaustless love. He leadeth them into green pastures and by the side of still waters. His mercy to them that fear and love him endureth for ever.

The Lord my pasture shall prepare,
And feed me with a shepherd's care;
His presence shall my wants supply,
And guard me with a watchful eye;
My noonday walks he shall attend,
And all my midnight hours defend.

When in the sultry glebe I faint,
Or on the thirsty mountain pant;
To fertile vales and dewy meads,
My weary, wandering steps he leads,
Where peaceful rivers, soft and slow,
Amid the verdant landscape flow.

Though in the paths of death I tread,
With gloomy horrors overspread,
My steadfast heart shall know no ill,
For Thou, O Lord! art with me still:
Thy friendly rod shall give me aid,
And guide me through the dreadful shade.

The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. This crowns the evidence of his matchless goodness. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends! But while we were yet enemies, far from Christ, before we had become members of his flock and fold,

"This Jesus died to have us
Reconciled in him to God."

How near and tender the relationship in which this condescension on his part brings us! He suffers us to look to him as lambs to a shepherd who will feed, defend, and save his flock—will give his life for them, rather than suffer one of them to be plucked out of his hand. But if this be the relationship, there are obligations on us which we ought to feel—ties made strong and holy by his love and his blood, that should draw us near and still nearer to his feet. We should trust in him for safety, for strength, for daily food, for the bread that perisheth, and for the bread that cometh down from heaven, and for life everlasting. His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. He is our great High Priest, and Prophet, and King.

These are some of the expressive types, and figures, and emblems, under which we are taught to regard the Saviour. Let us cling to him, and in our own sweet experience find him "the chief among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely."

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SERMON DCXLII.

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THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPERANCE.

"The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad"...Ps. cxxvi. 3.

The restoration of Israel from their seventy years' captivity, and their elevation in the land of their fathers to all the rich privileges of an independent nation, and the enjoyment of their Temple worship and religious consolations, forms one of the most affecting incidents in human history. To it all, they were not insensible. The law of gratitude was engraven upon their hearts. And, as by the rivers of Babylon they sat down and wept when they remembered Zion; as they once exclaimed in the bitterness of grief, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth," so with correspondent emotions, when the Lord brought back the captivity of Zion, they were like them that dream. The reality seemed to surpass all their fondest hopes. Their minds wandered over regions of delight, as those who sleep. But when they found there was no delusion; that they were once more in their fatherland, with Abraham's God for their protector, and the rich blessings of the covenant sealed and confirmed to them, then was their mouth filled with laughter; and, lifting up their hearts in gratitude, they exclaimed, "*The Lord hath done great things for us. The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.*"

Signal deliverances from existing or impending evils, demand from us both as individuals and members of the community, grateful acknowledgments. The proud atheistic heart may say in its folly, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the honor of my majesty?"—"my power, and the might of my hand hath gathered me all this wealth," or

"my wisdom and skill have extricated me from difficulties and perils, or warded off the pestilence that walked in darkness;" but this is not the language of nature. The poor heathen in their blindness, cry every man unto his god when distress comes upon them, and in the hour of deliverance, sing pæans to that imaginary Deity which has interposed for their relief. A marked, but very erroneous judgment, however, of divine interposition, is not unfrequently noticed even among those observant of the hand of God; for in some, so direct is the divine agency, that it is next to impossible for any but the most stupid to refrain from gratitude and praise; while in others, so much do they seem to be the result of human foresight and prudence, and the vigour of man's arm, and the perseverance of a spirit determined to conquer, that, with many, God's agency is almost a nullity, and man has all the glory; whereas, could we sift such deliverances to the bottom, we should often find that here there was most of the hand of God; that here, in employing human instrumentality; in bringing thousands who meant not so, to accomplish his purposes; in making the wrath of man to praise him, and restraining what would disturb the order of God's government, there was present, far more than in all others, of his all-controlling wisdom and power. To which class of merciful providences the temperance reformation, of whose triumphs it is my purpose to speak, belongs, it is not necessary to determine; as, it is presumed, there any none present who will not accord with the language of the text: "THE LORD HATH DONE GREAT THINGS FOR US; WHEREOF WE ARE GLAD."

I am aware that when we speak of the evils of intemperance, and of what has been accomplished in our own land, to say nothing of other lands, we are accused of exaggeration. This is not surprising. Indeed, how can men who have taken no gauge of this vice, who look abroad upon society, and observe only its lovely exterior, its outward order, its happy homes, its charities, its commerce, its arts, and its efficient government, see cause for that representation of intemperance which is so constantly rung in their ears? Man, free himself from trouble and basking in the sunshine of prosperity, can easily believe there is no sorrow to soothe, no evil to eradicate. The evils of intemperance cannot be exaggerated. Had they come upon us in any other way than through the delusive gratification of appetite or pecuniary gain, the land would have been covered with sackcloth. A blast, or a tempest, which for ten successive years should sweep away fifty millions of property, would be viewed as the ruin of the nation. But intemperance costs us annually an hundred millions. A foul spirit let loose from the pit, with power to destroy the sober judgments of men, and excite to the commission of every abomination and crime; or a dire disease sweeping over the land, not like the frightful cholera, extinguishing man's life almost without warning, but first crippling all the physical, intellectual and moral energies of five hundred thousand of our citizens, turning some into idiots, some into maniacs, and some into fiends to be the torment of their families, nuisances in society, accursed of God and man; living only to make a god of their belly; and then dying amid the horrors of an anticipated hell, to enter on one where hope never comes, but torture without end, with shame and everlasting contempt, would have caused us to feel that earth was forsaken of its kind benefactor and all the curses of the pit were let loose

upon us. And yet these, for years on years, have been the entailments of intemperance. Under its prevalence, crime has trod on crime and blood touched blood. At a low calculation, in the last fifty years, as many million years of human probation have, in this land, been cut off; more than 1,500,000 persons have sunk into drunkards' graves; five thousand million dollars have been uselessly expended; ten thousand murders, with conflagrations and shipwrecks unnumbered, have been caused, and procession after procession has gone to the poor-house, the jail, the madhouse, and the ophan's home. In Great Britain it appears, from statistics published by the British Parliament, that while the annual expense for bread was 130,000,000 of dollars, the immediate cost of the liquor consumed was 250,000,000; resulting in an amount of squalid poverty, vice, profligacy, and crime, of which no mind but the mind of God can have adequate conception, and sending sixty thousand human beings, in a land of the very brightest gospel light, to the drunkard's grave and the drunkard's eternity. You ask of those who cause this evil, what intemperance is, and you are told it is only a slight irregularity; a little undue excitement of the nervous system, through a pleasant, though, perhaps a dangerous beverage; a habit of social life which had perhaps better not be formed, but being formed, must be indulged; and all indicative of good rather than vicious and evil feelings, and to be pitied rather than condemned. No; No. That is not intemperance. That is the language of the father of lies. Intemperance is this broad stream of woe, and wounds, and madness, and deaths, bearing onward to eternal despair the brightest hopes and joys of earth; inflicting its curse not now and then, after interludes, like war, and famine, and pestilence; but never ceasing; never softening; ever crying, give, give; consuming the world, and laughing at its ruins. No! Intemperance admits not of exaggeration. What worse can you say of a man, than to call him a drunkard? To say nothing of his physical condition, loathsome to a proverb, go over the whole catalogue of vices enumerated in the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and find one, if you can, that does not belong to him—"filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit malignity, haters of God, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful." What curse like this can come into a family? What evil like a drunken father or a drunken mother? What will so bring down a parent's gray hairs with sorrow to the grave as a drunken son? And what will so shut out the light of truth, the light of heaven, and seal up the soul in eternal night as strong drink? The drunkard curses God, burns his Bible, and damns his own soul. Eternity, eternity alone reveals his end! And yet this plague of plagues; this fountain of blasphemy, poverty, and crime; this poison, corroding and destroying the life-blood of the nation, has been staunched till we have hope for ourselves and our children. About thirty years ago, a war of extermination commenced against it. It was like David with his sling and stone; but as we now see the giant in the convulsive agonies of death, we exclaim, What hath God wrought! We raise a song of thanksgiving and praise, saying: "The Lord hath done great things for us! The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."

Before I speak of recent occurrences promising to be the crowning ele-

ment of our great enterprise, permit me to turn your thoughts back to one or two divine interpositions to which we owe much of what we enjoy

The first was, the awakening of the country to the existence and enormity of the evil, and leading men who feared God and loved righteousness, to breast it, be the sacrifice what it might.

It has ever been one of the peculiarities of intemperance that it sinks men in Lethean slumbers. They who are the guilty cause, and they who are the victims, alike feel that they are innocent in the matter, and that nothing can be done to remedy the evil. If it be an evil, it is an evil of but small extent; and connected with so much necessary to the well-being of man, that to attempt its eradication would be like the cutting off a diseased limb which should result in the death of the whole body. Accordingly, in the early part of this century, intemperance sat as one well expressed it as a great nightmare upon the breast of the nation. There were horrid sufferings, but every limb was spell-bound. All moral power was broken. Men preferred their sufferings to any disturbance of their delusion. They denied the extent of the evil, and made sport of every attempt at reformation. He who preached on temperance was not merely the song of the drunkard, but of his own church and of every moderate drinker throughout the land. The distillery and the brewery were the fair handmaids of agriculture, and the licensed traffic was the hope of the public treasury. The excise, it was believed, supported the poor, and paid the expenses of the common jail and the lunatic asylum. Neither the farmer could gather his harvest, nor the mechanic endure his toil, nor the physician visit his patient, nor the minister leave his pulpit, nor the traveller prosecute his journey, nor the mariner plough the deep, nor the slightest hospitality be shown, without the intoxicating cup. As well might a man attack, or ridicule, or reason down the whole system of respiration, as the use of intoxicating liquors. But there was a power higher than man. It was the mighty power of God. That awakened the conscience; that broke the delusive charm; that arrayed before a suffering world the horrid demon; that lifted up the veil that blinded the eyes of the nation, and caused them to start back affrighted and lift up their hands to Heaven for deliverance. Never may it be forgotten, how, as the first pioneers of temperance went forth, clad in the panoply of truth, there was a stirring among all the dry bones of the valley; bone came to his bone; life was infused where there was nothing but death and putrefaction, and the convicted and converted stood upon their feet an exceeding great army. In 1832, more than 4,000 temperance societies had been formed in the United States; more than 1,500,000 persons abstained from the use of ardent spirits; 1,500 distilleries had been stopped; 4,000 merchants had abandoned the traffic, and 4,500 intemperate men had abandoned their cups. It was hailed as one of the most wonderful and glorious triumphs of virtue over vice the world had witnessed; and it was even then felt, that, should the cause prevail throughout the land, "blessings, mighty as her rivers and exhaustless as the soil, would break forth upon the people, and flow down in ever growing richness and variety to all future ages."

At a subsequent period, another special and wonder-working interposition of Divine Providence was seen in the sudden reformation of nearly all the inebriates throughout the nation. That rational, considerate and

religious men should listen to truth and flee from danger at a solemn warning; that those who ascribed all hope of their salvation to the great sacrifice on the cross, should be willing to make sacrifices for others, and resolve that they would "neither eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor any thing which caused a brother to stumble," may seem not so surprising; though apathy and indifference, even in many branches of the Christian Church, awfully prevailed; but that besotted, scathed, peeled, blaspheming, God-defying, brutalized men, whose God was their belly, and who gloried in their shame, should by thousands on thousands, in all parts of the land, awake to a sense of their awful condition, burst the chains that bound them, trample their appetite and all temptations in the dust, and stand forth, reformed from all that which made them so peculiarly odius and vile in the community, was what none could look for in this world of sin and partial retribution. And yet it was to be. And when men beheld it, they exclaimed, "With men it is impossible, but not with God, for with God all things are possible." A miracle it was not; for it occurred in the course of God's providence and as the result of adapted means. For fifteen years an amount of information of which we have little conception, on the evil nature of intoxicating drinks and the doom of the drunkard, had been spread abroad. Thousands and even millions of sober men had abjured the cup. Deep anxiety had settled down on the minds and hearts of broken-hearted wives and parents for drunken husbands and drunken sons; and prayer unceasing was offered that they might in some way be redeemed and saved. The crisis had come. It was to be; and it was to be through the instrumentality of God's truth, that God should have the glory. Four of the six inebriates with whom it commenced went to the house of God to hear one who, in God's name, was to expose the sin of drunkenness and the drunkard's doom. They were pricked in their heart. On their return, the jeers of the bar-room had lost their power. They signed a pledge, and commenced the work of reclaiming every inebriate in the land. Some jeered; others mocked; but many went from their meetings to pray. The conscience of the reclaimed wretch gave God the praise. "It was God," said one, "who saved me: he broke the chains that bound body and soul; he enabled me to stand up in my manliness and be free; my poor heart is full; I am almost blind with the tear in my eye; I brush it away to say, 'Glory to God in the highest.' "And if, of the half million of the lost men, who in that great work, of 1840—41, were reclaimed, a no inconsiderable number went back like the dog to his vomit, it derogated nothing from the operation as the wonderful providence of God, and the power of sympathy and truth. It only illustrated the debased and unfeeling condition of society which should let them go back; the horrid evil of the traffic, licensed in our midst; and, above all, the folly, then most signally manifest, of relying upon humanity and the strength of man's resolution without help from above or devotedness to the divine service. But it was a wonderful work, for which thousands of families, relieved and redeemed exclaimed, "the Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."

Passing by numerous other divine interpositions in this great work of reform—for I believe the hand of God has been in it from its commencement, though many things may have occurred which could not be approved by his omniscient eye,—I come to those more recent occurrences

which are now so extensively filling the hearts of the friends of God and man with joy and praise.

Contending with intemperance, we have been like men resisting the tide of the ocean. Now it has retreated before us; and now it has come in upon us with new and terrific power. Once and again it has seemed to breathe its last breath; but, on the morrow, it has wound itself around as with the cunning of the serpent, and torn us with the ferocity of the tiger. One principle, sufficient enough of itself to save a world, was early established: ABANDON THE DRUNKARD'S DRINK, AND YOU CAN NEVER BE A DRUNKARD! But how could a world, busy, gay and thoughtless, a world bent on luxury and sin, resist at all times a temptation presented in the most alluring forms; and keep under an appetite, satisfied, at any moment, without skill or effort? It was impossible. The early legislators of the land said, the temptation should be regulated; a limit should be put to its power; a character should be required, to wield so terrific a force, both moral and good; and if evil ensued, it should be charged to him who caused it. "Out of the eater should come forth meat, and out of the strong should come forth sweetness." Alas! if ever the devil, the great adversary, more fatally and successfully deceived the world than in any other event, it was in that whole system of license which would quiet christian states and nations, while 30 and 60,000 victims of the cup, year after year, in successive generations, went down to the pit. Excise officers gloated in the price of blood; and the vendor over the dead bodies of his slain, wiped his mouth and said, "I have done only what, by the law of the land, I was warranted in doing." But many of the pioneers in reform saw the delusion, and demanded in its stead a system of entire prohibition of the traffic in ardent spirits as a beverage. They were men of thought, men of prayer, men of self-denial, men who were not to be turned aside from duty by the cry, "By this craft we have our wealth," or the crocodile tears of those who were rioting in blood. Said the distinguished author of the reports of the American Temperance Society, Dr. Justin Edwards, in 1834, "The point to be decided by legislators of these United States for all coming posterity, for the world, and for eternity, is, Shall the sale of ardent spirit, as a drink, be treated, in legislation, as a virtue or a vice? Shall it be licensed, sanctioned by law and perpetuated to roll its all pervading curses onward interminably; or shall it be treated, as it is in truth, a sin? And if there shall in future be men base enough to continue to commit it, shall the community, in self-defence, by wise and wholesome legislation, shield themselves from its evils?" Said a Committee of the Legislature of the State of Maine, in 1837, seventeen years ago, after presenting a masterly report in favor of a prohibitory law, "Your Committee are not only of opinion that the law giving the right to sell ardent spirits should be repealed, but that a law should be passed to prohibit the traffic in them, except so far as the arts or the practice of medicine is concerned. Such a law is required for the same reason that we make a law against the sale of unwholesome meats, or a law for the removal of any nuisance." In 1838, numerous petitioners in Ohio, to the Legislature of that State said: "Among the scourges which have desolated and are now afflicting our country, no one can be named which bears rivalship with intoxicating liquors. We implore your aid to protect us against this destroyer of our

species, this common enemy of the human race. It was to extend protection like this, that government was established." In the same year a Committee of the Legislature of Massachusetts reported a bill prohibiting the entire sale of all liquor as a beverage, "because the public good demanded it." And a Committee of the Legislature of New York reported that, "To prohibit the traffic in ardent spirits, as a beverage, was as necessary as to prevent gambling, brothels, and other public nuisances; and that the voice of the people required certain and present action in the case." In 1839, a highly respectable Convention in New Hampshire resolved, "That there should be a final and complete prohibition in the traffic in alcoholic liquors by legislative enactments." More than 7,000 petitioners in Vermont, in that same year, asked for a prohibitory law. And a large meeting of citizens of Delaware, resolved, "That nothing short of an entire prohibition of the sale of liquors, as a drink, can extirpate drunkenness." The inhabitants of Lewisburg, Virginia, said the same year to their Legislature, "if the laws will continue to permit sinks of vice, poverty, and crime to stand open night and day, the same laws must continue to provide poor-houses, and even graves to receive their degraded inmates. Can it be necessary to keep up this state of things for ever? must we see our parents destroyed, our families ruined, and our children driven into that ruthless tide which overwhelms all who embark on its treacherous waves, in unutterable despair? Is there no remedy? There is. Repeal the laws in question, and provide suitable anactments against the further sale of the poison." And the same year, a Committee of the Senate of Kentucky, in reporting on a petition from Mason and Brancken counties, asking for a law which shall make the vending of spirituous liquors of any description as a drink, or the giving of them to evade the law, an offence of no ordinary magnitude, punishable by the State, said, "There is but one remedy, and that will be effected if our countrymen have the courage, the constancy, and the energy to carry it into complete execution. The remedy is, to attack the evil at its foundation. The practice of retailing alcoholic liquors, except for medical purposes and to promote the arts, must be not only forbidden by law, but completely denounced by public sentiment." And in the same winter, 1,351 citizens of Michigan presented a memorial to their Senate and House in which they prayed, that "all license laws be repealed, and that the sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage, be prohibited by penal statute." In 1840, a Convention in Massachusetts having 1,180 members, unanimously resolved, "That, until the laws of the State concerning the sale of intoxicating liquors are fully and firmly established upon the basis of prohibition, like the other penal and criminal laws of the Commonwealth, it is, in our opinion, the duty of temperance men to vote only for those men as candidates for legislative and executive officers, who are known and inflexible friends of such a course of legislation." "And never," said the Wisconsin Territorial Society, in an appeal, the same year, to the inhabitants of the territory, "never was there a nobler incentive to action, than is presented to us to crush at once this demon of human happiness. Not the laurels of the conqueror on the battle-field, nor the purpose of the crusader to rescue the holy city from the tread of infidel feet, are half so fitting the commendations of this enlightened age, as he who wars the foe of intemperance, and seeks to drive it from our soil."

Thus, fourteen, and even seventeen years ago, the minds of men in several of the States were fastened upon entire prohibition, as the only remedy for the evils of intemperance. And had it ripened and become the great principle of action, Oh, what a tide of blessedness would have rolled over the land! But at that moment, the great Washingtonian reform, of which I have spoken, arose. It was a mighty whirlwind of love—love for the poor drunkard; love for the drunkard maker; love for the distiller and brewer. It discarded all law. It would reform the world by pure kindness. The hardened vendor took refuge in its sanctuary. He hated the woe, the curse, the fine, the imprisonment which had been his portion. Only let him alone and deal kindly with him, and he would abandon his business as soon as convenient. Then moral suasion took the throne to do its own work, and the work of another; first to persuade men to do that which it was expedient and well for them to do, and then to prevent their doing that which was wrong, and to be punished by the judges. Here was its great error, and the cause of its failure. Paul said, "All things are lawful; but all things are not expedient. One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby the brother stumbleth or is offended or is made weak." Here was room and work for moral suasion. But when God said, "Thou shalt not commit adultry. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Thou shalt not covet," here was law with penalty. The apostle said, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." It was appropriate and effective moral suasion. But when the reformed men said to the liquor-seller, "We beseech you not to kill;" "We beseech you not to steal;" "We beseech you not to covet," what did he care for them or their supplications? "His mouth was full of deceit and fraud; under his tongue was mischief and vanity. He still sat in the lurking places of the villages, in the secret places did he murder the innocent; his eyes were privily set against the poor. He did lie in wait to catch the poor; he did catch the poor when he drew him in his net. He did crouch and humble himself that the poor might fall by his strong ones." They did fall. Washingtonianism did go down before the accursed traffic, legalized in all the land. How could it be otherwise? And it was ten long years before we regained the ground lost, and the people came to the conclusion that all license laws were a nullity—aye, a curse—legalizing that as right, which was a great moral wrong—and filling the land with lamentation and woe; and, therefore, that we must have a prohibitory law in every State in the Union. In 1851, Maine, the DIRIGO State took the lead. Under a faithful servant of the State, in the wonder-working providence of God, she extended the broad shield of protection over her children. By one bold act she expelled the traffic from all her towns and villages, and became a vast and blessed asylum for the inebriate. The rising territory of Minnesota followed. Then, the State of Rhode Island. Then, Massachusetts. Then, Vermont, Then, Michigan. And now we have the high gratification of seeing near two-thirds of the electors

of the State of New York standing forth in favour of a prohibitory law; an individual placed in the Gubernatorial chair, who has long been the able supporter of its principles; and a Legislature to whom in confidence we can commit its great interests. Not a State has retracted from the high stand it has taken; while in other States the leaven of reform is powerfully working. Indiana and Illinois are ready for prohibition. Nor will Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Texas, be slow to follow. The North will give up and the South keep not back; and men in other countries are already hailing and welcoming this as one of those great morsl revolutions which occur, under God, in the course of ages, to root out sin and sorrow, and usher in millennial glories.

Consider three things; and, without caviling at its novelty and freshness, or the imperfection of its operations, acknowledged to be great, you will unite in saying, THE LORD HATH DONE GREAT THINGS FOR US.

I. This new system of legislation is MOST JUST IN ITS BASIS. Protection is the birthright of man. It is the object and end of civil government. It is the ordinance of Heaven. Man has no right to injure his fellow man. Living alone in a state of nature, he may do what may never be permitted in a social condition. If any law gives him permission to take his neighbour's property without an equivalent, to undermine the health and destroy the lives of hundreds around him, to tax the community for his own gains, to make widows and orphans by thousands, and scar the land with murdered victims, that law should be overthrown and protection be given. If constitution authorize it, constitutions must be overthrown. But no constitution is at fault in this matter. "If any State," says the able Chief Justice of the United States "deems the retail and internal traffic in ardent spirits injurious to its citizens, I see nothing in the constitution to prevent it from regulating and restraining the traffic, or prohibiting it altogether." If the seizure and destruction of liquors kept on sale be ordered as a nuisance and disturbance to the best interests of the community, it is in perfect accordance with long established municipal regulations. "The safety of the people," says a side Judge of the same high court (Grier), "is the supreme law. The exigencies of the social compact require that such laws (laws for the protection of life and liberty) be executed before and above all others. It is for this reason that quarantine laws, which protect public health, compel mere commercial regulations to submit to their control. They seize the infected cargo and cast it overboard." Thus the way has been prepared for our advance.

II. IT IS IN PERFECT CONFORMITY TO EVERY PRINCIPLE OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT. When and where has God licensed men to do evil? When and where, to oppress, and deceive, harden, and destroy? The times of men's ignorance, when they once worshipped the host of heaven, God indeed winked at; servitude of man to man he regulated by law, but always for its ultimate destruction; but he said peremptorily, "Thou SHALT NOT KILL;" and if the ox, which was wont to push with his horn, was suffered to be abroad to the destruction of human life, the owner was held responsible and put to death. Like the law of God, the legislation in which we are rejoicing, makes no compromise with evil. It licenses no man to sell the intoxicating cup, and make a drunkard of his fellow

man. It warrants no individual in spreading snares and traps for his weak neighbour, and enticing him in the path of ruin. It permits no man to take his neighbour's money and give him strong drink in return; to be a curse to his wife and children. It fills up, by authority, no jails or poor houses with miserable tenants to be supported by the sober; and desecrates no Sabbath by a trade which drives man to their regions of despair. Like that law, it is a law of perfect reciprocity, requiring us to do unto others as they should do unto us. License laws, under which we have long lived, or rather groaned and died, have authorized men to do that to others which, for worlds, they would not receive in return. If all the victims of strong drink, with their suffering wives and children dragging out their lives in jails and poor-houses and insane asylums, could be gathered in one dread array before the hosts of distillers and venders, and, for one hour, inflict upon them the pangs which they suffer for years; or, still more, if there was, day by day, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," there would soon be an end to their cruel traffic. Like the law of God, too, it lays the axe at the root of the tree, and cuts it down. When idolatry had become an unendurable evil it was not to be regulated, but extinguished. Every grove was to be cut down; every altar to be overturned; every image broken and turned to dust, to be strewed upon the graves of those that had sacrificed unto them. And when the books of those who taught the curious arts of divination were brought forth and laid at the apostle's feet, they were to be burned, though their value was 50,000 pieces of silver. Here is solid basis for thanksgiving and praise, when human laws, rising above selfishness and mad ambition and cruelty to the weak, conform, if it be only in their negative character, to God's law. But—

III. This legislation which we hail with so much joy, is most MERCIFUL and BLESSED in all its operations. It shuts up the sluices which have so long deluged the land with a sea of fire. It take the great dragon, the enemy of all that is blessed on earth and in heaven, and binds him in chains that he shall deceive no more. Vice, crime, disgusting inebriation, besotted manhood, domestic poverty, domestic cruelty, wounds, madness, deaths, flee before it, and give place to peace, order, sobriety, plenty, love and joy. "Instead of the thorn, comes up the fir tree; instead of the brier, the myrtle tree." "Peace is as a river, and righteousness as the waves of the sea." Says an intelligent gentleman in a neighboring State (Vermont), where the change has been made, and the prohibitory law is in force, "Ten thousands streams of woe have been dried at their fountains; pauperism in many localities has been most suprisingly diminished; gross inebriety, if witnessed at all, excites astonishment." "Before the passage of the law," says a respectable gentleman of the State of Maine, "our towns were groaning under the weight of taxes caused by enormous pauper bills, brought upon them, in three cases out of four, by persons who had become miserable in the use of intoxicating drinks. Our jails were filled; quarrelling and fighting were so common in our streets as to excite but little attention. Now, quarrelling and fighting have ceased. Our young men are becoming soldiers in the temperance army. Distressed familes are relieved. Many a poor woman has come to me and entreated me (for he was a magistrate) to continue to enforce

the law as the salvation of herself and household." And another, the distinguished author of the Maine law, and for a year, Mayor of Portland, declares, "Thousands of families now live in comfort, who formerly found a precarious and scanty subsistence, or depended on private charity, or upon the almshouse for support. The drinking man, reformed by the removal of temptation, and restored to his right mind, no longer on the Sabbath seeks the beer shop (there is no beer shop), but he turns his steps, with his wife and children, to the house of God; and the children formerly ragged and neglected, are now constant attendants on the Sabbath school. Two millions of property, worse than wasted, are now saved to the State, to be expended on all that adorns and blesses man." Says Governor Dutton of Connecticut, a State where the law is receiving its most happy fulfilment, "I hazard nothing in saying, that no candid enemy of the law will deny that it has proved more efficient than its most sanguine friends anticipated. It has completely swept the pernicious traffic from the State. An open groggery cannot be found. I have not seen a drunkard in the streets since the first of August. In our cities and manufacturing villages, streets that were formerly constantly disturbed by drunken brawls, are now quiet as any other. The statistics of our courts and prisons prove that criminal prosecutions are rapidly diminishing in number. Some jails are almost tenantless. There are hundreds, I have no doubt, thousands of families, who are, in this inclement weather, well supplied with comforts, who, but for our law, would be destitute. The general effect is a sober, calm, quiet air of security, pervading the whole community, which it is delightful to behold and enjoy." Blessed triumphs! But to see their complete value, we must go into the families but recently scathed and peeled, and hear the relieved wife and mother speak. Says one, "my heart is running over with very happiness, and my soul goeth forth in praise toward him who hath blessed me and all the State with me. Blessed be God for the Maine law! My husband—be still my heart, while I tell the glad tidings—he who has so often returned to me, with, in place of his own kind heart, the rum-fiend, and has been so harsh, so cruel, *is himself!* And now he is kind and affectionate; we have all we desire, and happiness, full, complete, is all our own. Again let me say, 'Blessings on the Maine law, the true friend of the poor.'" Aye; we must go into the inner chambers of the immortal man, and see the spiritual disenthralled; the deceiver cast out; the mind, bursting from its sensuality and looking up to God, its maker; the Sabbath peaceful; our Sunday grog-shops closed, even in our largest cities, through indirect influences where the law has not yet been made; and the churches and the ministry casting their eyes peacefully and joyfully over spots where Satan's seat was, and where they were there song of the drunkard now cleared of the abomination of desolation. But all we hear and see is but the embryo of what is to be. Let this system of legislation prevail in this State, and all the States of the Union, (and who can doubt but it will?) and what an amount of physical suffering will be saved! what moral evils! what blasphemies! what Sabbath breaking! what licentiousness! what hatred, murder, revenge, disruptions of family ties and family peace! what distressing casualties on the land and the sea! What a saving would there be of property and health and life! what prolongation of human days! what removals of obstructions to the

spread and reception of the Gospel at home and among the poor heathen around the globe! All is too much for the mind to grasp. But, as we behold the darkness flee before the day, and know and rejoice in the contrast, so would it be here. Our land would scarce be recognized as the land in which we have dwelt. A new nation would be born, and all the tribes of the earth would come to witness the wondrous spectacle.

With a few remarks we close.

And, first. How high the hope raised by these things for our country and race! If the deadliest foe to human progress and to all that secures human happiness, sustained by combinations of wealth, and luxury, and brutal appetite, and law, can thus be arrested and turned back, under God, by the power of a rectified public sentiment, surely we need not despair of a far higher state of human society than we have ever witnessed! And how high the hope raised, too, for the Church! Those bright days promised by seers and prophets, when holiness to the Lord shall be written upon all employments, are not all imaginary days. God's law shall yet be the model of all human laws, and men shall everywhere see the blessedness of obedience, and kings shall be nursing fathers and queens nursing mothers to the Church, and there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy in all the holy mountian.

Second. We pity the men who have no sympathy in the work now receiving such glorious triumphs. Not men who find their gains threatened by all these movements, and cry out to save themselves, "Those that have turned the world upside down have come hither also." Not men who "drink wine in bowls," and care not for the afflictions and sorrows of a suffering world. All such we expect will rail, and revile, and abuse, and destroy. What care they for the relief of the miserable, or saving souls from death? But there have, from the beginning, been men professing philanthropy, patriotism, and godliness, who have not merely stood aloof, but have hindered and opposed us in our onward progress; always crying out sullenly, "Too FAST AND TOO FAR," and manifesting anything but a spirit of joy, as our laborers have come home, bringing their sheaves with them. Such now begin to find themselves in deep waters. These recent triumphs of temperance begin to trouble them. To resist all this light is more than they can well do. Deny the facts they cannot, and they dare not. "It will be a short career," is all they say. But would they dare rejoice in its overthrow? Will they even dare aid its overthrow by expressions of unbelief in its verity or continuance? Oh! it will roll onward in all its glory and blessedness, and they shall see its future triumphs—triumphs enough to cause heaven and earth to ring with acclamations of joy and gladness, but they shall not taste them. It is these we pity. They would do good; they see this work, but are not of it. Dead, heartless conservatism has sealed up all their souls. How tremendous the day when they must appear before Him who has said, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, it is sin," and the enquiry shall be made, Why, when I engaged in subduing one of the greatest foes of God and man, and rescuing thousands from the pit, why did you not come to the help? Why did you not consecrate to it your time and wealth and influence? Why did you not shout for joy in its final triumph? May God save them from the doom of the unprofitable servant.

Third. An immediate, prompt, and hearty co-operation in the further advance and triumphs of temperance, is the unmistakable duty of all.

Our work is not finished. We know it. We need not be taunted of it by our enemies. But we are grateful for progress. We rejoice in what our eyes see and what our ears hear; and from this we have hope and responsibility for the future. Going before us in mercy, God bids us follow-after; and the more He has done for us, the more we must do for Him. This is God's work. The man who denies it is an Atheist. It is a war between God and Satan; heaven and hell; the spirit of light and the spirit of darkness. It is a work in which there can be no neutrality. He that is not for it, is against it. It is a work in which there is a heavy individual responsibility, and every man must bear his own burden. No man can say, "The extirpation of intemperance belongs not to me; I make no professions of temperance; I belong to no temperance society. I have other duties to perform." Every one is a member of the great family of man, and every one is bound to help and relieve his suffering fellow man. Every parent and every child—every neighbour and every friend—every magistrate and every teacher—every voter and every legislator, has a duty here. On those especially who make and execute our laws rests, to-day, a peculiar responsibility. Whatever may have been thought in former days of its necessity or propriety, to-day, in the providence of God, it is brought to their doors. The people, the true sovereigns of the land, delegating them to act in their behalf, have risen in their majesty and strength, and demanded action, prompt and efficacious. They may be indifferent themselves—they may be cold-hearted politicians—they may even be corrupted by the bribes of those who fatten on the miseries of an outraged community, and may roll it back upon the people; but the people will rise in their majesty and roll it back upon them till the waves of a tremendous indignation shall sweep them from their seats, and leave the work to be accomplished by others. God will hold them responsible; and the tears of the oppressed, the widow's cry and the orphan's wail shall go up a memorial against them. Who for paltry pelf, or the world's applause, would incur their doom? Thanks be to God that our law-makers are so readily advancing to the work, and causing the blessing of future generations to come upon them; and that none have been found in a single Legislature retracing their steps.

The Church, too must feel her responsibility in the matter. What is she, with her ministry, but God's great reforming power in the earth? Let her hold back and sustain the distillery, and the brewery, and the dram-shop, and what will she be but the scoff of the ungodly, the very loathing of Christ; And yet, are there not pulpits in the land in which this great work of reform is never mentioned? Are there not ministers and communicants who eat calves out of the stall and drink wine in bowls, and say no, "No Maine Law for us?" O tell it not in Gath! Humbled be the church that contains in her bosom such inconsistent members. Oh, when there is such advance in every department of human industry—when science is penetrating the most distant heavens, and art is doing all human work, and the ocean bows beneath man's sway, and the lightning is made his messenger—the churches cannot and will not be backward in advancing the triumphs of their great King. These victories are his victories. These conquests, rolling in one after another, will speedily bring the earth to his feet.

Men of wealth, too, have their responsibility in this matter. These triumphs of humanity are not carried forward without pecuniary means. Men of talent and influence must be sustained, while devoted to the exposure of the enormous evil and the exhibition of truth. The press, with its vast power, must be brought to bear upon the vices and follies and all the delusive arts of a wicked world. And to our men of wealth, we justly look for the ablity we need. They generously build alms-houses for the needy, and hospitals for the insane. Jails of immense magnitude are erected at their expense for burglars, man-slayers, and murderers. But often, how misplaced their charities! how futile their plans to relieve and protect communities! A little thus expended, given to make and sustain humane and righteous laws, would almost save the remainder. And how blessed to the poor! What a relief to thousands of suffering in our cities in these times of pressure and want, would the closing of every grog shop be! In the habitations of our working men, now wasting their earnings upon intoxicating drinks, there would be bread enough and to spare Our ten thousand beer-houses and grog-shops now fatten on the miseries of the poor. Let the rich make the paltry sacrifice required, and aid in this glorious reform, and they will indeed become fathers to the poor and hear no more cry for bread. And as we advance to this new system of legislation every magistrate and every citizen is bound to aid in sustaining it. Law is of no value unless it is enforced. To suffer it to lie dead on the statute book, is to give vice its freedom, and sin and suffering a triumph. Fear of reproach and suffering may deter many from duty; but the little finger of a broken and neglected law, will be stronger than all the sufferings and expense and toil of duty done, and law mantained. Woe, woe to the man who stands afar off, and sees the wicked triumph!

And we need, and feel for a certainty we shall have the aid of woman. Among the thousand blessed influences which have been exerted under the civilizing influence of Christianity to redeem woman from humiliation, disgrace, and suffering, what will be found to have a higher place than this very legislation in which we are rejoicing? Nothing. Nothing, Thousands and thousands of suffering wives and daughters will here wipe tears from their eyes, and praise God for the relief afforded. Come, then, ye daughters of America, come and cast in your lot with us and in every sphere in which you can exert an influence. let it be for this blessed enterprise.

We conclude with one prayer: Lord give us thankful hearts for the past; and then. for the future, we cry, Lord! give us faith.

"Sir," said a clergyman of high standing and influence in Connecticut, to us once, "Do you believe we shall ever get the Maine Law in this State?" "Yes," we replied, "Well, I do not," said he: "I have no faith at all in it." "Then, sir," we answered, "if you fail of it, it will be because of your unbelief. It is unbelief that is the curse of the Church, and that keeps the world in the chains of Satan. While you have no faith, you can neither pray nor preach effectually, for earth's deliverance." Oh! it is faith that is the root of all activity. Unbelief will never put the hand on the wheel that set the whole machinery of life in motion. They believe; and therefore every husbandman in his field, every mechanic in his shop, every mariner on the ocean, every merchant in his counting-room, every professional man in his practice, press their

operations and reap their harvests. What if there are obstacles to the further prosecution of our enterprise? What if custom, and appetite, and interest, and political wire-pullers, and cold-hearted christians, and the rich in their voluptuousness, and the poor in their degradation, are against us? What if to defend themselves from us and fill us with terror, the ten thousand distillers, brewers, and vendors in our land, wreathe themselves together like the wriggling pyramids of snakes in the swamps of Guiana—where, we are told, thousands and thousands in self-defence are sometimes seen "rolling spirally on each other in one tremulous mass of writhings, with a thick array of heads thrust out upon every side, with firy eyes, and venomous darts, and horrible hissings; the cold, deadly saliva issuing from their fangs;"—or what if the wealth of the State is all displayed as too costly to be sacrificed to our fanaticism; and all the ruin which must come upon families unnumbered, now faring sumptuously every day, is portrayed on the wall by a master hand; there is power in God, power in truth, power in humanity to sweep them all away. If we have faith as a grain of mustard seed, we may say to all these mountains, "Be ye cast into the sea, and it shall be done;" faith, that virtue shall triumph over vice, humanity over oppression, liberty over tyranny and God over all that blots his image from creation.

But amid the triumphs which we witness, and for which we once and again lift up our hearts in gratitude to God, who now doubts our success? Who now feels otherwise in his heart, than that, sooner or later, the law of entire prohibition is to be the law of every State in the Union. Who would not start back affrighted and in horror at the thought that the Maine Law was now to be repealed, and that all these States were to roll back to their former condition of drunken misery? Men may swagger in the grog-shop, and rail and abuse in the political meeting, but there is not a man who dare go into his closet, and on his bended knee, with thought of wife, and children, and judgment to come, pray that it may be so. If then our very enemies yield to our claims, why should we falter? Why hesitate a moment to lay the axe at the root of the tree and hew it down, and cast it into the fire? Lord! we say, give us faith, faith in the justice and goodness of our cause; faith in the power and aid of thine overruling providence to carry it forward and bring it to perfection; faith that it will triumph in all the earth. If there must yet longer be delay, and drunkenness with all its concomitant evils must prevail, and procession after procession, for some mysterious end, still march on to the drunkard's grave, ours be exemption from guilt in the matter. But there cannot—there will not. Every indication of Providence tells us "the good time is coming." This tremendous power for evil through which we have so grievously suffered, is to be overthrown; and as one State after another outlaws and put a chain upon the dragon that it shall deceive no more, we will come forth with songs and praises to Him who is God over all, blessed forever; and when the good time has come that this traffic shall cease among men, and the last drunkard shall have been made, and the last family been scathed, and the last soul been destroyed by this foul fiend, then shall earth rise in one glad anthem of praise from every mountain and valley; and every nation, and all the islands of the sea, repeat the glad Amen, and Amen. God grant that we may do our duty, and all be saved in the great salvation.

SERMON DCXLIII.

BY REV. WILLIAM WARREN

UPTON, MASS.

RELIGIOUS PROGRESS: THE BLADE, THE EAR, THE FULL CORN.

"First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."—MARK IV. 28.

We have here a favorite and forcible method of Gospel teaching—the use of the parable. By a well known law of vegetation, the seed cast into the ground presents to the eye, first the blade, or spire. A new form now appears, resulting from, and yet differing from, the natural soil and seed. It has broken the ground and shows itself to the sun and the air. But this is not the fruit, nor the ear. A new development is looked for; nor is the husbandman disappointed. In due time there is the unfolding of another form of the grain—the ear. This looks towards the harvest. It is in accordance with the great law of vegetable development. There is natural progress here. The blade has come to serve a new purpose. It stands and grows, not for itself now, but for the ear to nourish and ripen it. But this is not the end of the sowing. The ear itself has no essential value, till it comes to be clothed with the full corn in the ear, ready for the sickle and the garner. The soil is for the seed, the seed for the blade, the blade for the ear, the ear for the corn, and all for man, and for God. The one is developed into the other. There is a natural growth and progress here, which forcibly illustrate the things of religion and another life. The Saviour presents this beautiful simile to exhibit the necessity of progress in the *spiritual* world. There is an analogy between what we see in the field of grain, and what takes place in the spiritual life. In both, progress and maturity are looked for. Religion has its origin, not only, but its eras, its growth and perfection. The same great law underlies this subject, that pertains to natural things. There must be progress in order to perfection. Life cannot long remain stationary, whether it be natural or spiritual. When grace ceases to grow, it begins to languish. Should we not be surprised to find that the grain did not pass beyond the blade form? That it failed to bring forth the ear, and the full corn in the ear? Should we not marvel to see that the babe in the mother's arms made no progress, did not grow, that year after year passed away without any development of size, or strength, or reason? We should suspect that there was some lurking disease, or natural cause in the system. And ought we not to marvel, yea tremble, to find that our *religious life* is making no progress, is coming to no new developments, that there is no growth, nor fruits nor signs of maturity?

The subject to which your prayerful attention is called to day, is the duty of *reconsecrating yourselves to Christ;* of leaving the things that belong to the infancy and childhood of faith, and entering upon a vigorous christian manhood. We need as a christian people a new life, a new birth and baptism, a new and entire consecration to Christ. We need

not only to do our first works, and return to our first love, but to go forward to greater works and sacrifices than our first, and exercise stronger and purer affection for Christ than we ever felt. And as I proceed to enforce this subject, I would—

I. Appeal to the Scriptures, to the law and the testimony. The oracles of God are not silent on this subject. I refer, first, to those passages in the Prophets and the Psalms that rebuke the backslidden, and appeal in startling tones to the disobedient and the halting. Return unto me, saith God, and I will return unto you. Wash you, make you clean. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Ezekiel and the minor prophets utter themselves in words of terror to the disobedient and the wavering. Again, all those texts that refer to the kingdom of heaven as progressive, under the parable of the mustard-seed, or the leaven, or the rising light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day, go to illustrate and confirm this duty. Those Scriptures, too, that speak of religion as a race, or a struggle or a warfare, are in point here. Those, too, that require growth in grace, and exertion in spiritual things, the addition of one excellence and attainment to another, and the abounding in spiritual traits and fruits, set forth this duty in a very clear light. And then all those Scriptures that require us to leave first principles, to cease to be babes in Christ, and go forward to perfection, set forth very plainly the great duty of Christian growth. The word of God is full of warning and startling appeals to the lukewarm and worldly professor; and full of exhortations and encouragements to progress in the spiritual life.

II. It is a most *reasonable service* to which I now exhort you. It is one that falls in with the nature of things; yea, with every law that regulates the natural and spiritual world. "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." But how did the Corinthians, how did we receive Christ at first? By repentance, by consecration, by throwing ourselves upon him and trusting him in all his offices? It was by strong resolutions and vows and pledges, most sacredly made and held. To walk in him, therefore, is to *continue* in these and similar exercises to the end. It is to bear to the hill-top the cross we first took up. It is to carry out unto death the sacrifices we first pledged; and to let these first spiritual exercises be deepened and strengthened and developed to a full maturity. Conversion is but the first step of the Christian's progress. Religion is only the repetition of these first steps, by which we are to gain new fields and heights of glory. The faith we first felt is to be strengthened and heightened into vision Our first repentance and humility are to be deepened, until we are lost to sin, and self, and earth. So of hope, and love, and joy; these are to become more and more serene, and pure, and celestial, as years pass on. There is no reason why these christian experiences should stop at the new birth, and not make new and higher developments to the end. Is not their fulness as desirable as their commencement? Is not completeness of christian character as necessary, and as much enjoined in scripture, as the possession of christian character at all? Is not heaven as really conditioned on the fulness and maturity of christian experience and character as on the existence of such experience and character in the first case? How readest thou? Are we not as really under a spirit of infatuation, to hope for eternal life, without a

growth and ripening of Christian character, as we are to hope for heaven without any religious experience whatever? I challenge you to show me a promise in the Bible, for the faltering, stationary, worldly professor of religion. The encouragements of Scripture are to the earnest, the steadfast, and obedient,—who gird on the whole armour—who run the whole race—who fight the battles through—who, leaving the infancy of faith, go forward to manhood. How can we gain the goal, if we do not pant for the prize? It is the nature of true religion to perpetuate and propagate itself. A little desires more. If we possess true piety, we shall seek to increase and abound in the possession of it more and more to the end; nor shall we ever be satisfied till we come to possess the fulness of it.

It is so with earthly things. It is of the nature of knowledge to beget the desire for more knowledge, and the increase only produces intenser desires for higher and vaster attainments. So of happiness; a little enjoyment, instead of satisfying the soul, does but kindle the desire for more enjoyment; and the more we have the more we want,—more requires more. So of wealth; the possession awakens the craving, and millions do not satisfy it. So of fame, and friendship. So of almost everything God has made us to enjoy, and of some things he has not made us to enjoy. And is religion an exception to this general law? It certainly is not. If it exists at all, it will awaken the desire for more, for higher and fuller attainments. And where the old nature overlies and oppresses the new principle, there will be restlessness within, an agony, which can never be allayed or abated, till the new life is relieved, and developed, and expanded into full maturity. I therefore say, that the duty of frequently dedicating ourselves to Christ anew, is a most reasonable one. It accords with the nature of the case, with the nature of all analogous things, and with our own deep conscious necessities. It falls in, too, with the teachings of revelation, that has no promise for the sluggard nor the backslider; none for the worldly and wavering professor; nor for the neutral, the stationary, and compromising, in the christian course.

III. We can *have no reasonable hope that we are indeed Christians*, except as we have evidence that we are making progress in a religious life. One that does not grow in grace can have no proof that he has begun the christian race. He that has experienced but *one* change, (if his hope dates back far,) has poor evidence that he has ever met with any change at all. One change will lead to another. How can a consistent hope be cherished that does not lead to frequent refreshings and renovations in the divine life? Where is the passage of Scripture that encourages the stationary christian, or flatters the neutral, halting, compromising disciple? I suppose it is generally admitted, that whoever draws back to the world, and apparantly abandons the christian race, demonstrates the emptiness of his profession, and the guilt of his heart. With the Bible in his hand, but the world and the flesh in his heart, who can cherish and hold without presumption, the christian hope?

But if it is impossible for those who have fallen away from what was considered a state of grace, to have any proof of a saving change, it is equally clear that all who settle down into a formal, irresponsible state, who are contented with their first conversion, making no sacrifices for Christ, nor advances in the divine life, are infatuated if they yet cling to

the christian hope. Why should one have hope *after* his change, any more than before, if that change does not last, if it does not perpetuate itself and multiply itself in the life? Did that change reach perfection at once? If not is there not need of its repetition and continuance, till it comes to maturity and completeness? Is there not the same need of this as there was that it should take place at all? It would seem that a consciousness of christian imperfection, of a hungering and thirsting for spiritual good, but of a failure to reach that good, and fulfil the high obligations of the Christian hope would force a true disciple to repentance, and a renewed consecration of himself to Christ. How can he have Christian confidence if he neglect to do this? How can such a consciousness and a christian hope long dwell together? Such convictions, such misgivings, and a holy confidence, and earnest expectation, can they abide in the same breast? They can not, they do not. The consciousness will destroy the confidence in the case; or it will lead to a new consecration. I appeal to the experience of my hearers. Are any of you in this state of Christian indifference and neutrality, bound and spell-bound by the world and its allurements? If so, let me ask you what is the state of your hope?—have you any? If so, is it in the ascendant, or declining? I am aware of the *possibility* of carrying a delusive hope to the grave; we read of such hopes in the Bible. But I say with boldness, that the person whose religious experience paused at conversion, and has declined rather than advanced since, has no Bible ground of hope that he has ever commenced the christian race. And if he still clings to a hope at all, it is without a foundation or warrant, either in Scripture or an enlightened consciousness.

IV. *We cannot consistently exhort others to consecrate themselves to Christ* unless we are willing to renew our own consecration to Him. We cannot urge others to do what we neglect to do ourselves. We shall see the inconsistency, and the effort will re-act upon our own feelings; and sinners will see the inconsistency of it, and unless modesty or courtesy restrain them, will cast it in our teeth, and take up the proverb, "Physician heal thyself." Such inconsistent and heartless exhortations are more than neutralized by the felt inconsistency in the case. But let the *broken hearted* exhort the careless to repentance; let the humble and believing exhort a fellow mortal to flee from the wrath to come, and take refuge in Christ, and he will feel the force of the exhortation. But if that exhortation come from a wandering or halting professor, its force is lost. Whoever exhorts another to do what he is not doing himself, labors under the two-fold disadvantage of conscious inconsistency in himself, and of failing to reach the confidence of the other. His words want power and effect. They do not go out from the heart, hence they do not go into the heart, but die on the tongue, or react upon the speaker, to destroy his peace and hope.

He cannot exhort another to consecrate himself who neglects to consecrate his own heart anew to Christ. He cannot urge another to repent, whose own repentance need to be repented of. We cannot exhort others to do or become what we are becoming and doing ourselves. Look at the case. If you have sin in your heart, is there not as much need that you should repent of that sin, as there was that you should repent of your sins at first? What is there, I ask, in the nature of sin in the *Christian's*

heart, that should exempt him from that deep and thorough repentance which must be felt for sin in the *natural* heart. How is indwelling sin ever to be removed, except by repentance and separating yourselves from it, and it from you? The blood of Christ washes away only the sins that are repented of and forsaken, but never the sins that are indulged and cherished. No; the duty of repentance can never cease till sin has ceased: and sin can cease in no other way than by repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. And can we—can we exhort others to that duty, when we ourselves, who are sinners still, do not do it? There is great inconsistency in the case.

Take another test—that of love to God. Now, who can tell why we should not love God with the *whole* heart, as really as that we should love him at all, or with a divided heart? And how can one who knows that his own love to God is feeble and feeble, faithfully exhort another to that duty? Is it not as really his duty to love God with a stronger affection, as it is to love him with the least affection? Is it not as really his duty to love him with all the heart, as it is the duty of his neighbour to love him at all? And can he consistently urge another to love God, while a part of his own affections are withheld from him? The whole heart is really due to God as the first faint affection; and whoever fails to render the higher degrees and exercises of love to God, is inconsistent in his exortation to others. We are bound to go on, from strength to strength, from height to height, in holiness; and whoever fails to do this, is not at home in his efforts to make others holy, and to bring the world to God. Am I reasonable here? Can moral change consistently stop till there be no more ground nor room for change? Can repentance cease till there be no more sin? Can love languish in its progress till it has absorbed and filled the heart? Can faith pause in its flight till it has reached vision? or hope, till it has grasped reality? or duty, till strength fail, or the whole will of God is done? And to fall short here ourselves, stops our mouth in argument and exhortation with others.

V. The necessity of a new consecration to Christ *accords with the feelings and convictions of all.* Where is the professed Christian that does not feel the importance of a deeper work of grace in his heart? It is your confession on all sides, christian friends. There is not an impenitent person in the world, that more frankly acknowledges the importance of a change of heart in his case, than you all do, my brethren, of a deeper work of grace in *your* hearts. I appeal to your convictions and confessions here. Did you in your sinful days ever feel more deeply the need of religion, than you now do of *more* religion? And do you not now feel that a re-consecration of yourselves to Christ is just what you need for enjoyment and usefulness? That it is just as much your duty and is just as indispensable to your salvation as was your *first* consecration. Let me come to your hearts here! Do you expect to get to heaven with the small amount of piety that you now have? Does it answer a good conscience? Does it answer the purposes of the *present* life even; the great ends of duty, and example, and sacrifice? If not, then do you not feel the need of a new consecration, of being born again, of going through entirely new experiences and exercises, of forgetting the things that are behind, and of reaching forward to those that are before? You know that a change in your case is necessary.

Too little, no doubt, is often made of conversion; but I fear sometimes that *too much* is made of it. For while the great change is oftentimes explained away, or greatly depreciated, it is sometimes substituted, we fear, for the whole work of salvation. This latter error is as fatal as the former. How much there is that is called religion that never passes beyond the blade! It has broken the ground, indeed, so did the seed that fell in stony places; but there it stands, stinted, pale, and perishing. There is no advancement, nor development, no earing, nor ripening. It is your honest feeling, my friends, that much of the religion of the day has scarcely parted the earth, or parted with it. The world is closed hard and solid upon it. Or if it even appears, it is the low, faint, fruitless spire,—without ear or corn! My brethren, can you bear to have it so? Must it always be thus with you? Have you so learned Christ? Is this all he has called you to,—all he expects of you, all the world expects of you? Is not a different type of religion necessary? Are not new advancements in holiness demanded? Do you not aspire to a more heavenly frame than this? Have you all the religion you expect, or need, or want? Have you enough to make you happy, or only enough to make you unhappy? Have you enough to make you useful and respected, or only enough to make you a stumbling-block? Have you enough to give you hope, or only despair? To give you faith, or only doubts? To give you love and zeal, or only conscious languor and a sense of painful indifference and unworthiness? I am confident I have your convictions and feelings, as I plead with you to leave your present standard, and go forward in the divine life.

VI. You all *expect* to make these higher attainments. No one reasonably hopes for eternal life, just as he now is. No one can be truly satisfied and content with his present moral state and standard, till conscience is utterly annihilated, and the spiritual susceptibilities are extinguished. There is a voice of remonstrance in man, and of withering rebuke, that accords with the word of God, and responds to the quickening spirit of God. This voice startles and arouses us, and tells us of danger and necessity in our case, and assures us of the great need of moral change and maturity in order to salvation. But *when?* seems to be the question with man,—both the christian and the sinner. The latter knows that the change and the change must come, or he will perish. But the question with him seems to be, *when* shall it come? Reason and revelation say *now*, NOW is the time. But he rebels against *now;* he admits the duty, the necessity, and thus *seems* to rebel against the time, rather than the thing. But is it so? Is it the *time*, after all, that he refuses, or the *thing itself to be done!* Oh! if he were ready for the change, if this were agreeable and desirable, the time would be *now!* Now is the chosen, accepted time, for all that we love, for all we are really willing and desirous to do, or to be.

It is so with the christian; he not only feels the need of new attainments, and a fresh consecration and re-consecration to Christ, but he expects they will come; he *seems* to hope they will come, and almost looks for them. He would be in terror and despair, if he were told that they would never come. But alas! his time is not yet. He thinks the present not the most favorable opportunity; the same spirit of procrastination, that thief of time and of souls, has seized upon him, conquering

his resolutions and his energies, that sings syren songs around the impenitent and the self-secure. There is not one who does not expect, and seem to hope, that he shall stand upon the mount of religious attainment, before he leaves this life. But how many differ from God, in regard to the true accepted time and day of salvation!

Finally the great mission of the church can never be accomplished without a deeper baptism of the Holy Ghost. Ordinary christian attainments can effect but little; they do not answer the ends of salvation even, much less fulfil the great ends of the church. These first faint, fitful experiences are nothing to what the nature of depravity and of redemption demands. Conversion only begins the work of salvation. Christ and christianity are falsely represented by these grovelling attainments. No; we must pass from height to height, from strength to strength; we must often go through changes as great as we ever before experienced,—and would there not be room for a great many such changes, before we should reach perfection, or could stand before God? But how shall we gain these heights and experiences, but by renewed consecrations, by deeper baptisms, and more thorough crucifixions to the world, and a mightier power of christian faith! Do you ask who can bear these things; who can believe them? I fall back upon the Bible, and upon your own consciences. The fulfilment of the promises and prophecies wait for such developments and experiences in the Christian church,—and they have commenced already in some of our mission churches; but when these become general, a doom is put upon atheism and infidelity; delusion and error will die; systems of cruelty will crumble to the ground; revivals of pure religion will prevail; their absence will be the *exception*, rather than the rule. The host of God, with banners white and waving will march forth, to conquer the world. The missionary fields will all be occupied; moral enterprise and achievement will be triumphant! Christianity, then will be demonstrated as true; the Bible will be placed beyond cavil or doubt. Nothing is needed to give conquest to Christ, and the truth, and overthrow the monstrous systems of error and iniquity in the world, but the general prevalence of such christian experience, and such a standard of holiness as have been described.

Are there great sins and evils in society? Yes, there are. But what can be done? Shall we pass laws? Yes. Shall we establish societies, and set in motion christian agencies and enterprises? Yes, all these; and yet there is a more excellent way. It is to seek for ourselves, and for others, and the world, higher christian attainments, a deeper experience in divine things. It is to make everything of religion and its institutions. These are the machinery to change and bless the world.

Have you personal trials and sorrows? Are you filled with fears and terrors, in view of the future? What are you going to do, my friends. How are you to get rid of them? I know of but one way; it is to give up the world and yourselves, sins and sinners, to Christ and Him only, and then all these terrors will cease.

If religion is a reality, it is everything; and if we would possess it we must not stop short of a thorough experience. If we *love* at all, why not with all the heart? If we give up one sin, why not every sin? If we surrender one thing to Christ, why not everything? If we have commenced the christian life, why stop till the work is complete?—what is

worth beginning is worth finishing ; what ought to be commenced ought to be completed. The first step is useless, if the succeeding ones are not taken ; it is the last step, not the first, that takes the prize, the crown. Old experiences are good only as they lead to new ones. Repentance that stops at conversion, will not do ; it will need to be repented of. The faith that only takes hold on Christ, and then lets go of Him, is fit only to be cast into the grave of dead works. And now what are we to do, you ask. If you are in true earnest, it is easy to tell you.

1. Think on your ways ; *your* ways, and not the ways of other persons. And what *ways* they have been ! How perverse, how crooked, how wandering, and fearfully descending in their course! How unworthy of God, and your high calling ! How dishonorable and crucifying to Christ ; How grievous to the Spirit ; how discreditable to the church, and stumbling to the world ! Think of your ways, your neglected responsibilities. You are held answerable for all you have, or have had the *power* and opportunity to do ; for duties neglected as well as offences committed. Oh ! think upon your—*your* ways. They are paved with broken vows ; they are lined with the wreck of promises and resolutions; they are overhung with forbidden fruit, and strewn with ruined hopes and disastrous deeds. Think of them, as David did of his. Reflection is the path to reformation ; consideration, to conversion.

2. Cherish the Spirit, if peradventure he has not left you for ever. His drowned voice may yet be heard, through the clamour and noise of the world. He calls you to duty ; shows you the folly and bitterness of past transgressions, and the importance of faithfulness and exertion in the future. It is safe to follow his promptings; his influence is the one cord which holds you back from destruction. His light is the last ray of hope to the soul ; his fire, within you, is the last spark of salvation ; do not quench it. Give yourself up to his influence, and it will make your spirit to be as the tinder in which that spark will become a flame. Everything is gained by yielding to the Spirit ; everything is lost by quenching his influence. Cherish those influences, if you would not die. Welcome his breath, his flame ; yield at once to his all-awakening and all-renewing power, lest you perish. He is searching for your heart and will ; he seeks for your consent and co-operation in the work of salvation ; but he operates only upon *your* agency and powers. He strives—not to do your work for you, this he cannot do—but to make *you* willing to work. Do what he bids, and it will be for your life.

In a word—let prayer, and sacrifice, and exertions abound. The more you do, and pray, and suffer, the more you will be like Christ ; and the more you will think and feel, and the more of faith, and hope, and love you will have. Prayer is the path to God, and to heaven. We wander on our feet, but return on our knees. Harken not to syren voices. What you do must be done quickly ; begin it now ; take to your heart the Scriptures ; cease to speculate upon them ; begin to practice them ; but in all these things, take Christ as your all ; give your sins to him—trust only to Him for salvation. Take Him as your sacrifice and your sanctifier ; follow him as your guide and your glory.

I turn now to those who have not given themselves to God at all. You have heard all I have been saying to professed christians, and perhaps have enjoyed it, and regard it all as deserved ; but every word of it

applies to you. If they must *continue* in holiness, in order to see heaven, how can you go to heaven without any holiness whatever? If they must continue to repent and forsake their sins, in order to be saved, how can you be saved who have never yet repented of one of your sins? If they must grow and ripen in grace, in order to stand in the Great Day, how can you stand in that day, without any grace at all in your hearts? And if they must press forward to the end of the race, to gain the heavenly prize, how can you obtain that prize, who have never taken the first step in that race? I cannot urge you to hold on in the christian course, for you have not yet commenced it. And the danger is that you never will; that sins, and doubts, and delays will destroy you. Do you ask me what you shall do? If you are in earnest, I will answer you. Do just what you know, in your conscience and heart, you ought to do. Take the first step in the narrow way, the road to life and heaven, to-day; and go forward, from strength to strength, from height to height, till the earth is beneath you, the river of death behind you, and heaven and glory around you. Amen.

HYMN.

O speed thee, Christian, on thy way.
And to thy armour cling;
With girded loins the call obey
That grace and mercy bring.

There is a battle to be fought,
An upward race to run,
A crown of glory to be sought,
A victory to be won.

The shield of faith repels the dart
That Satan's hand may throw;
His arrow cannot reach thy heart,
If Christ control the bow.

The glowing lamp of prayer will light
Thee on thy anxious road;
'Twill keep the goal of heaven in sight,
And guide thee to thy God.

O faint not, Christian, for thy sighs,
Are heard before His throne;
The race must come before the prize,
The cross before the crown.

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SERMON DCXLIV.

BY REV. ISAAC P. STRYKER,

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DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."—JOHN i. 1.

Eighteen hundred years ago a strange personage appeared in Judea. Forty centuries had looked for his coming. Generations of patriarchs, kings, and prophets had rejoiced in his anticipated day. All prophecy had woven itself around him as its centre. The fulness of thought and language had been poured out to describe his kingly nature and the glory of his appearance. The names of the Divine Being had been lavished upon him. To him was to be given the dominion of the whole earth, and He was to reign as David their prince over Israel, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens was to be his. And He was to reign with a perpetual triumph.

At the same time He was spoken of as one despised, rejected of men, a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," to be bruised for our iniquities, have the chastisement of our peace laid upon him, and his soul be made an offering for sin.

The exact time of his appearance, the place of his birth, and the circumstances, the murderous intent upon his infant life, the vindictiveness of his enemies in after years, were all minutely described. The comparatively few who would believe his report were mourned over: His betrayal by a traitor friend; his violent and ignominious death, with even the manner in which his garments would be divided by his executioners and his body would be buried, were foretold.

In the fulness of time this long anticipated being appeared. In him every circumstance recorded of the Messiah was fulfilled. His life was spent in doing good. He taught a code of the purest morals. He made religion simple and easy to be understood. He exposed the corruption and wickedness of a proud priesthood and broke their influence. The corrupt priesthood and the proud rulers of the nation banded themselves against him. With undaunted mien he braved their open attack, and to the face condemned and exposed their wickedness to the people; with matchless wisdom he met their covert approaches, and avoided the entanglements which bitter enmity and consummate artifice devised. No man was ever so hated; no one's life so exposed to the watch of foes; no man's character was so tried. And yet through his whole life, no ambition, pride, covetousness, envy, revenge, or impurity was ever even charged upon him.

His life of self-denial and God-like deeds was crowned with a fitting death. In dying agonies he asked for the forgiveness of his malignant, mocking enemies. The same God-like spirit he had manifested in his life, he breathed out in his death. All that was noble, sublime, and beautiful, clustered upon the brow of the peerless Son who came in human form to save and bless. A character, a life and death more God-like, we cannot conceive.

No wonder that upon him rested the ardent gaze of kings and prophets, as through the prophetic glass they looked down the vista of ages, and saw his glorious form! Nor is it strange that with like feelings the Christian now looks with inexpressible pleasure upon him "who is the brightness of his Father's glory," and in whom "the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily." No wonder that the Christian heart, unsatisfied with gazing upon him "through a glass darkly," should often long for the time when in the presence of his Lord he shall behold his unveiled majesty, beauty, and glory.

But from admiring and loving this noble Being, we must turn to the important inquiry, Who was He? Who is this Being who possesses such matchless wisdom, such faultless character, such heavenly beauty?

Our answer to this question should be well considered, for it is of infinite moment. For our belief upon this point will determine our treatment of him. To this question two parties give answers diametrically opposite.

One party affirms that this Being was the uncreated God in the flesh.

The other party affirms that he was a mere man, or created being.

The one party *de*thrones God; the other *en*thrones man. Between these two thoughts there is no middle course. Erroneous belief, by either party, through a wicked heart, brings home to

the soul the highest crime against God—the damning guilt of blasphemy. Where so much is at stake, we should honestly seek to know the whole truth, for in following that alone are we safe.

My present object will be dispassionately to examine the question of Christ's Divinity, to disentangle it from much of the perplexity with which it is often involved, even in the minds of believers. And also clearly to set before the minds of others *what* we believe, and *why* we believe thus.

I shall discuss the subject under three heads:

I. I allege that he was truly a *man*.
II. That he was more than a *mere* man.
III. That his superiority consisted in his being God.

I. We affirm that Jesus Christ was truly a *man*. We do not mean by this that he possessed merely the form and physical organization of a man. Some have held that though there was a perfect human *body*, there was no human *soul*, but that the body was a mere instrument or means through which a superior intelligence made himself visible to mankind. Such an assumption of the human form is possible, for many times it was done by angels when they were sent with messages to men. But surely we should not call such an appearance a man, when we knew that it was an angel veiled in the flesh. It is also true that upon two occasions, at least, God himself assumed the human form. Once, accompanied by two angels, he appeared to Abraham, and as wearied travellers they partook of his hospitality.

At another time, He appeared unto Joshua as a man arrayed for battle, giving himself the title of "Captain of the Lord's host." By such assumption of the human form, the nature of the being assuming it is not changed. The angels still possessed their angelic natures unfettered by the forms through which they manifested themselves.

Deity was not made a man by assuming a human appearance. He was still the Eternal. That speaking eye that beamed mildly upon the father of the faithful, was still the eye of Omniscience. Through that arm that seemed only human, Almighty power poured its strength. The worship of Abraham and Joshua was then rendered him as properly as was that of Israel when, gathered at the foot of the trembling mount, with reverence and awe they bowed before him.

By appearing in a human form to Abraham and Joshua, he showed that Divinity might veil itself in the flesh, and when so veiled, the propriety of divine honors being rendered him, while it destroys all argument derived from the improbability that Deity would condescend to assume a human form.

We do not mean that Jesus Christ was a man in this sense

alone. For if his was only a human form in which a superior being was enshrouded, the name of *man* to him would be misapplied.

We mean that connected with that body was a human mind or soul. And that human mind or soul was in every respect like that of all others of the human race. He was a man in the fullest sense that can be expressed. Many proofs of this statement might be adduced, but a few explicit ones will suffice.

First. This is expressly asserted: "Wherefore, *in all things* it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." "Seeing then we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with feeling of our infirmities, but was '*in all points* tempted like as we are.'"

Of course, unless there was a human soul with the appetites, passions, sensibilities, and weaknesses of our nature, he would not be "made like unto his brethren," nor could he be tempted like them. These passages could not apply to a divine Being dwelling in a human form. One other passage is, if possible, still stronger to establish the point. Luke says that he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Here the intellectual and moral growth of a human soul is as expressly asserted as the physical growth of a human body. It proves that a created mind dwelt in that form, for it could not be said of Divinity, that he increased in knowledge and holiness.

Again, In proof that he possessed a human nature, the whole narrative of his life presents itself. At all times He assumed the attributes of a man, calling himself such, hungering, thirsting, in weariness and fatigue, suffering under all human woes. His body bled under the scourge, and fainted under the cross. His soul writhed under its load of mockery, derision, insult, and fears of anticipated suffering. He bore this accumulated burden of woe; he meekly endured every grief, and triumphed over every temptation. But it was as a man he thus endured, and thus triumphed; for it is only as a man enduring the trials of life, and triumphing over temptation, that he could be an example to us.

This human soul, which was so united to a human body as the *man* Christ Jesus, had no existence until, united to that infant form, it waked to life as the "babe of Bethlehem." Then, as the body developed its powers, so did that infant intellect grow and expand. Its first moral character was holy, and never was its purity tarnished, while each advancement in knowledge developed new and brighter moral beauty, attracting more and more the love of his Heavenly Father. As he grew in knowledge he grew in holiness, and his excellence was shown forth in his life, gaining the approval and favor of all who looked upon him.

The apostle marks this as the growth of a man in knowledge and goodness.

II. Under our second proposition, we will show that *he was more than a mere* man. We do not mean by this that the human soul, which had just wakened to existence as the child of Mary, and dwelt in that human form, was more than human.

We mean, that connected with that human soul was a pre-existent being. We mean that a pre-existent intelligence of vast power united itself with that human nature, and made its presence known through those human organs, as angels and God himself had done of old. And as angelic intelligence and power did not become human ignorance and weakness by wearing a human form, so, in this case, this superior being, by a union with human nature, lost nothing of its own exaltation.

Nor do we believe that by a union of this pre-existence with the human mind, the nature of either was changed, compounded, or intermingled.

By such union the pre-existent mind did not become a creature of yesterday. Nor did the human become changed to a pre-existent intelligence. But each, while united in one body, using the same organs, had distinct thoughts, and all its mental faculties distinct from the other. Each mind acted within its own sphere, as distinct in all its mental operations as though dwelling in different bodies. The knowledge of the one was distinct from the knowledge of the other, and the knowledge of the superior became that of the human mind only as it was voluntarily imparted.

The existence and the union of this pre-existent nature with the human, I now propose to prove.

Of course, no one will say that two minds cannot be so united in one body. All that an objector can say is, that he has never seen such an union. But this objection ignorance may urge against every unknown truth. It certainly is not an argument. A very little modesty would prevent one from making his ignorance the boundary of knowledge, and denying that any thing could be which he had not seen.

We know very little about mental law. We know that we exist, and that in some way our mind is connected with the body. But what more do we know of this union? how do we know that two or ten minds might not be connected with the same body?

All that an objector can say is, that as such an union of two distinct minds in one body would be strange, he cannot believe it without clear proof. This is correct. We ought not to believe without evidence. But our belief of propositions may be demanded on different kinds of evidence. To gain a belief in some cases we ask mathematical *proof.* At other times we rely upon the *evidence of our senses, while* in other cases we must rest upon

the testimony of those qualified to give it, in whose word we may confide.

In the question before us we must rest solely upon testimony, while there are but two beings qualified to give that testimony. The one witness is the compound being who thus mysteriously exists, and who is certainly qualified to testify to the *fact* of this union of natures. The other witness is the Being by whom this union was effected—God himself. Our reliance upon the testimony of this compound being, if alone, might be weak; but if to the truth of his assertion we had the testimony of God, who could doubt?

Testimony may either be given by the living voice, or by the signature appended to another's statement. The being of whom we speak had both the voice of God testifying to his words and character, and also the signature of God, which cannot be counterfeited. God's voice, as Christ went forth to his work, commanded belief in his word: "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." And at every step he appealed to the signature of God—the power given him to set aside the physical laws. This was the understood sign of God's presence. It was the signet ring which prophets always presented, and to which they appealed when they spoke in God's name. Christ appealed to this, and demanded a belief that he was of God and his words were true. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the *works*." Here is God's signature; believe *that*, though you do not my words.

So long, therefore, as God permitted him to put forth this power to work miracles, so long he was responsible for the words of his messenger. His last act of raising him from the dead, was God's seal to the whole life and all the words of Christ. We have, then, but to ask, what does Christ say of himself? For to all of his words is the seal affixed. To question his testimony is to impeach God. His pre-existence Christ often asserted in clear language. Once he told the Jews that he lived before Abraham: "Before Abraham was, I am." The assertion was so plain, that his hearers would have slain him had he not escaped; while, by escaping without offering an explanation, he countenanced their construction of his words.

Also, in that last prayer he declared unto God that he had lived with him before the world was. "Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee *before the world was*."

In Philippians, also, it is asserted that he took upon *himself* a human form. "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but *made himself* of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Could such language be applied to a mere man? How strangely it would sound from the lips of Paul or Peter!

Also, it is said that through him God made all worlds, and all created beings. "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom, also, he made the worlds." "For *by him* were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created *by him* and *for him*." And again, "All things were made *by him*, and without *him* was not any thing made that was made." How could language be more carefully worded to assert Christ's pre-existence? Who could apply such language to a mere man? From this language common sense mind could derive no other meaning than that *He* who was thus strangely united to a human soul was a superior pre-existent being of vast power, who was, indeed, before all things, and in some sense, at least, was the author of all created mind and matter. These passages may be tortured to speak otherwise, but they cannot speak aught else that is reasonable.

We may now regard the two points upon which we have reasoned as proved—that, united to that human form there was both a human mind and a pre-existent being—that these two minds, though using the same human organs, were as distinct in their mental action as in their natures. When mind and body are united, the nature of either is not changed. *Mind* does not thereby possess color, weight, or form, nor does *matter* think, feel, or will. Though united, the attributes of neither are intermingled or confounded—but each in harmony with the other moves forward in obedience to its respective mental or physical law. The *fact* that mind and matter are so united we believe, but the *how* the union is effected we know not, and of that we believe nothing. The *fact* that these two minds were united in one body we believe, but the *how* the union was effected we are not informed, and we believe nothing about the *how*. Nor is this union of minds, though an anomalous fact, a fact any more strange than the union of mind and matter which we know in our own experience.

While these two minds were so united in one person, who was sometimes called the Son of God and sometimes the Son of Man, each mind was distinct in its own existence, with its own thoughts, its own purposes. The attributes of neither were in the least commingled or confounded with the other. This union accounts for the strange language that this being used in reference to himself. Sometimes he spoke of himself as a man—sometimes as a superior being. Now he claimed kindred to heaven, and then to earth. It was no more contradictory than that which *we* daily use. "I am mortal"—"I am immortal." Who misunderstands it? "I am thirty years of age." "Before Abraham was, I am." Is that language more doubtful in its meaning?

A belief in the two natures of Christ united in one person re-

conciles perfectly the Scripture facts, and makes harmony of those many passages which would otherwise be contradictory; and no other supposition can harmonize Scripture. If Christ was a mere man, how strange is the Scripture language concerning him? Is not its language intended to be understood in its plain and natural sense? Could any other construction be put upon these passages I have quoted, than that before the world was he dwelt in heaven with God, and *by him* and *for* him all that is visible of matter, and all invisible, that is, mind, was created? How this plain language must be tortured to make it speak aught else than that he was pre-existent!

Having, then, as I think, showed clearly from revelation the truth of the first two points: That Christ was truly a man like ourselves, with a human soul and a human body, connected with a super-human being, we come now to our third point.

III. And under this third head we propose to show that this pre-existent being, so united to the man, was *divine;* and that in this union of the human and divine nature consisted his superiority to a *mere* man.

There are not many who will insist, in the face of so much Scripture, that Christ was a mere man. Such belief requires such a torture of language, or such a bold denial of the book as God's revelation, that few will take and defend the ground that he was only a good man. Most will admit that with that human body there must have been associated a superior intelligence. Some admit that this intelligence was most exalted in his nature, higher than all the angels, principalities, and powers of heaven, for he was their Creator. To him such even ascribe the titles of God, and crown him with transcendent majesty and glory, while still they deny that he possesses divinity and is really God. They affirm that though so exalted, yet that he is a created being, and the creator of all worlds only as the instrument by whom Deity acted; that he was only the *vice*-gerent of Deity; that kingly and divine names are ascribed to him only as a compliment to his station as God's representative. Such deny his claim to be worshipped as God. Such admit that this exalted being assumed our nature, and that this union of the exalted and human nature accounts for the strange language which he uses when speaking of himself. Such admit and believe the *fact* of this mysterious union of natures, though they believe nothing and are able to tell us nothing about the *manner* of this union.

But it is the union of two natures, a superior and human, that involves all the difficulty. It is not increased by supposing that superior nature to be divine. If God could create such an exalted being, and unite him to a human soul, could he not unite that human soul to his own nature? And if He can unite himself to a human form, as He did of old, why may He not to a

human soul? Who can say that such a union of the Divine and human nature involves contradiction which Deity cannot overpass? It would involve a contradiction to suppose God endowed humanity with Divine attributes, and gave to the human soul Eternity, Omniscience, and Omnipotence—raising the creature to the throne of Divinity, making him a co-equal God! It would involve a like contradiction to suppose that the Eternal God made himself a creature of yesterday, and then increased in wisdom and holiness, as is said of the infant Jesus. To believe that the Infinite God became a man in this sense; or that the man was God; or that the same intelligence was both man and God; or that the Divine and human attributes were commingled, or belonged to the same mind—to believe these things would be to credit contradictions and absurdities. Such belief would confound all thought, and we may be sure God never asked it of his intelligent creatures. It is possible that some have supposed that such a mass of contradictions was the belief of those who held to the Divinity of Christ. It is certain that we are so charged. And it is against such supposed contradictions that the arguments and ridicule of those who deny Christ are aimed.

But we do believe that this was a *union* of the divine and human nature; not a change of either, nor a confounding of the two. The thoughts, feelings, and will of each were as distinct after as before the union, and the knowledge of the divine became that of the human mind only as it was voluntarily imparted. While the divine nature and the human soul acted separately in their distinct and appropriate spheres, they used in common the same bodily organs, and manifested themselves through the same form; so that at one time humanity speaks of its feebleness, inferiority, and ignorance; at other times, with the same mouth, the mighty God speaks as He did through bodily organs to Abraham and Joshua, and says unto the dead, "*I* say unto thee, arise;" "Lazarus, come forth!" declares that all hearts are known unto Him, and lays his hand as upon his own upon the sceptre of Jehovah.

The New Testament abounds in expressions that predicate weakness and strength, knowledge and ignorance, human and divine attributes of this compound being. Why should we not understand the language, and apply it to the man or the veiled God, as it is applicable to the one or the other?

We do not then believe contradictions when we acknowledge Christ's Divinity. When we worship him we do not worship the man Jesus Christ—but, as did Abraham and Joshua, we worship Deity veiled in human form. True, in our thoughts we may not always so separate the two natures, nor is it needful; it suffices that the mind is directed to him as God.

For proof that this superior being was God himself, we might take our stand upon the *names*, *attributes*, *works*, and worship

ascribed and rendered to him—for to no being less than God could such ascriptions be made without blasphemy. We might appeal to the worship rendered him in heaven, where he is associated with the Supreme Being in the praises of angels and the redeemed. But at the present time we will rest our position upon a short but conclusive argument derived from his trial and condemnation. So conclusive do we think it that we would willingly rest our belief of his Divinity upon this argument alone.

Christ was hated by the rulers whom he exposed; but was so beloved by the people that his enemies dared not destroy him by violence. When, at last, they had drawn him into their power, they sought to slay him through a judicial process. By carefully comparing the recorded particulars, we may see how they effected it. He had *two* trials. The *first* was before an ecclesiastical court, the High Priest and Jewish Sanhedrim. The *second* was a state trial before Pilate, the Roman Governor.

The indictments framed against him in these trials were different, though both were framed and prosecuted by the same persons. On the first trial his judges were his prosecutors. They hired Judas to betray, and witnesses to accuse him. The indictment charged upon him the guilt of "blasphemy"—"that, being a man, he made himself," or claimed "to be God." Witnesses were called, but no two were found to witness the same point. At last two were found who asserted that he claimed omnipotence, but in some way their testimony conflicted and was thrown out. Could this charge be sustained, his enemies could sentence him to death under the Mosaic statute. This statute, recorded in the 13th chapter of Deuteronomy, commanded death to those who enticed Israel from the worship of the true God. Could they not substantiate this charge, they must acquit him. Their witnesses all failed them, and, at the last, their only hope was that Christ would confess to the indictment. The High Priest proceeded, therefore, to put Christ himself under oath, adjuring him, by the living God, to speak the truth. He then put two questions to Christ. The *first* was whether he was really Christ, the expected Messiah. But, as if this was not explicit enough to meet the Mosaic statute, he added another question: "Art thou, then, the Son of God?" The language, "Son of God," may be used in various senses. Angels are called sons of God, and so is Adam called the son of God. But the High Priest meant not to ask whether he was an angel or a man, but whether he was the Son of God in the high sense charged—claiming divine honors, and so coming under the statute of Moses. He meant to ask whether Christ would confess to the indictment or no. So addressed, Christ was not to consider what meaning these words might *possibly* bear, but the sense in which the High Priest used them. He could not but know he was called upon to answer, whether he was the Son of God in the sense of claiming divine

rights and honors. He knew that by an affirmative answer he would be so understood. He was bound, therefore, so to frame his answer as honestly to meet the question. Thus adjured, God called to witness the truth, he answered, "I am." And as proof, he added, "Ye shall hereafter see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." The answer was clear and explicit. The High Priest rent his clothes, as the sign of horror at such open blasphemy. He said, no further witnesses were needed to prove the charge. They immediately passed sentence of death upon him. If Christ had not intended the sense which they put upon his words, he should have corrected it; not doing it was affirming that this was the sense he intended.

But this court had not the power to take life, therefore they carried him to the state court. Here they knew that his confession, as they understood it, would secure no conviction for crime or punishment: therefore they torture his words into a confession that would make him criminal in Roman eyes. They here charge him with making himself king in opposition to Cæsar. Upon this charge he was tried by Pilate. To Pilate's question, whether he did indeed claim to be king, as so charged, he answered, that it was true that he was a king. But, knowing the sense in which Pilate understood it was different from that in which he had been understood by the Sanhedrim, he explained himself, that his was a spiritual kingdom, and not of this world. Pilate was satisfied with the explanation and acquitted him. And afterwards learning from his prosecutors that he also claimed to be God, he sought earnestly to save him, but his fears of the Jewish rulers prevailed, and at last he gave up Christ to their will. The history of the matter, then, brings us to this point. Christ was arraigned upon the charge of blasphemy, in claiming to be the Son of God in such a sense as to incur the penalty of death under the Mosaic statute. To this charge, which he could not misunderstand, he confessed under oath, calling God to witness the truth of his claims. Upon this confession he was sentenced to death and executed.

With these facts before us, we are forced to believe one of two things: Either that that exalted, super-angelic being, who was next unto God in power and in glory, and his agent in the creation of all worlds, was guilty in the most solemn manner of asserting himself to be Divine, and claiming the honors of Israel's God,—while God, who afterwards raised him from the dead, and so endorsed his words, became accessory to his crime; or else we must believe that that being was Divinity veiled in flesh, Jehovah —God.

Who would dare charge the great God with the crime of endorsing falsehood? Who will dare deny to Christ the divine honors he claims as the Son of God?

Our examination of this subject prepares us to understand in what sense we believe the *being* who walked Judea, was a *man;* in what sense we believe he was *God*, and to see the overwhelming evidence which sustains our belief in his divinity. He was, and is, and ever will be a *man*. That human soul that began its existence as the "babe of Bethlehem," has not been annihilated. By its union with the Divine nature it has not become God, or been clothed with a single divine attribute. It is still a *human* soul. As upon earth its powers and faculties were unmingled with the divine, but, under the teachings of the Divinity within, grew in knowledge and in holiness, so will it be in eternity. Under divine teachings, most rapidly will that human soul advance in every intellectual and moral perfection. Under such exalted training, fed by Divinity itself, no doubt it has already far outstripped every other created intelligence—while with still more rapidly expanding intellect it dives into the deep things of God, and reaches out toward infinite knowledge, and yet will never sound the infinite depths of God! Though thus united and enthroned with Divinity, he will ever be one of our race, the counsellor, the instructor of his people—our *elder brother*.

Still will the divine Being, who veiled his Divinity with human flesh, wear our nature glorified. God the Son will be the Lamb in the midst of the throne, who will receive the honors and the worship of heaven.

In that glorious being God and man will be reconciled. God and man will be united. He will be the pledge for God's lasting love. He, as the representative of the race, will show the oneness into which God has taken his people, for as he is one with God, we shall be one in him. Christian friends, what awful glory do these truths throw around the cross of Christ! As we stand near the mount of suffering, we are prone to regard only human agony and human woe—to forget that Deity was enshrouded in that suffering, dying form. The whole mystery of redemption we may not here fathom, but we know that were the Lamb, the co-equal partner of the eternal throne, to lay aside the glories of heaven—to come down to earth and give himself into the hands of men and devils, to be insulted, mocked, spit upon, and crucified—it would only be a repetition of the scenes of Calvary! Could we gaze upon such an awful scene and behold the dying victim?

"Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in,
When God, the mighty maker, died,
For man, the creature's sin."

Well may we glory in the cross of Christ, and the gushing blood of the Son of God, that has washed away our sins. Let

us draw near with grateful love unto Him who is our life from the grave. We shall soon behold him whom we now love in his risen glory, and rejoice before him evermore.

For us, for each one of us, he trod the wine-press of the wrath of God. Who of us will deny that sacrifice, tread under foot the blood of the Son of God, and count it as an unholy thing? He shall come again in the clouds of heaven, crowned with the glory of the Father, to receive his friends to himself, but to take terrible vengeance upon his despisers. Where, then, shall each one of us be found?

SERMON DCXLV.

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GOD AND MAMMON.

"Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."—MATT. vi. 24.

MANY things were once regarded as impossible that are now of easy achievement. What would have been thought, a half century since, of our present modes of locomotion by land and by water? Had the idea been suggested, that man would ever plough the deep or hasten over the face of the earth by the agency of steam, it would have been pronounced impossible. Equally unbelieving would our fathers have been about the possibility of riding in the air, and communicating intelligence by lightning. But so it is. Men rise from the earth, and float about in the heavens—beneath or above the clouds, just as they please, and then return again in safety. And by the magnetic telegraph intelligence is spread from one city to another with the rapidity of thought. This is, indeed, an age of progress and achievement.

The improvement to which we allude is not confined to the arts and sciences. *Religion* has felt the quickening spirit of the age. New methods have been devised for bringing the truth of Revelation in contact with the minds of men, and thus extending the Redeemer's kingdom. Our benevolent institutions, which are the glory of this age, were not known to our ancestors; and perhaps they would have regarded such organizations as impossible.

There are not a few who look for improvement not only in the means of propagating the Christian religion, but in the system itself. Or rather, they look upon one system as waxing old and vanishing away, and giving place to another in quick suc-

cession. Such persons regard the Bible as an antiquated book—no more inspired than other books—well enough adapted perhaps to the ages in which it was written, but obsolete now. They might possibly acknowledge that it was not too crude and coarse for the times of Richard Baxter, or the more recent age of Jonathan Edwards; but they protest against it as a book for the present day of light and progress. They do not esteem it as a sufficient rule of faith and practice, made under the direction of the Spirit of God, and adapted to every age of the world, and all classes of mankind.

Such persons may demur at the declaration of our Saviour in the text. They might say, This asseveration of Christ was, perhaps, true eighteen hundred years ago; but astonishing changes have occurred since, wonderful progress has been made in *religion*, as well as in other departments, and the wise have discovered how they *can serve God and Mammon!* If there is any truth in the maxim, that "actions speak louder than words"—if *by their fruits ye shall know them*, then it is clear that there are many who would fain be reckoned among this class. They are connected with the visible family of Christ, and are hopefully his friends; the world, also, they eagerly pursue, and cannot be said to have renounced it. They profess to serve the Lord, and at the same time they are not wanting in the most conclusive evidence that they serve the world. Such persons, if any, may claim to have conquered impossibilities—to have acquired the wondrous power to *serve God and Mammon.*

The kingdom of Christ consisteth in *righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* This is established in the heart of every true Christian. But many who professed to have received it have been engaged in wars of aggression and extermination. Their brightest laurels were gained on the field of blood; and yet they are canonized as saints. If so, they *served God and Mammon.* Our holy religion is humane and benevolent. Its cardinal principle—its essential nature—is love. It teaches one to *love God with all the heart, and his neighbor as himself.* This every professed disciple of Christ is understood to do. But how many there are who hold their fellow-men in bondage—buy and sell, and treat them as cattle and sheep; and how many more that oppress and grind the face of the poor, and yet have reputation for piety. Such surely must have learned to *serve God and Mammon*, if any have ever made the attainment.

Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; and a woe is denounced against those who put the bottle to their neighbors' lips and make them drunk. But not a few have been engaged in this very work who were connected with the Church of Christ, and have thus been accessory to an evil that has filled poor-houses and hospitals and penitentiaries, which has sent poverty, wretchedness, and woe to many habitations, and hastened millions to a

dishonored grave and a miserable eternity. If men who have done such things were Christians, then they were successful in *serving God and Mammon.*

In former days the Sabbath was regarded in some good degree according to the commandment. It was a day of rest for man and beast. But now a person may be professedly a child of God, and, at the same time, have from two to twenty horses going every Lord's day for purposes of business or pleasure! Such men are *helping the ungodly* in the way to ruin, and are doing more to undermine and overthrow the institutions of our beloved country, I verily believe, than all the powers of despotism and infidelity combined. If such men are Christians, then they must have learned to *serve God and Mammon.*

It used to be regarded as wholly inconsistent with that sobriety and decorum that mark the Christian character, to mingle in these vain and bewitching amusements to which the world are so much attached. But now we have members in our churches that love to sit at the card-table, join in the giddy dance, and sometimes visit the theatre! They have discovered the art of *serving God and Mammon*, as they appear to think. They have learned how to mingle the *pleasures of sin* with those of religion, so as to enjoy them all together. It should be a matter of thanksgiving with such that things have so altered in this age of progress and improvement, that the *world and the flesh* can be freely enjoyed; and as for the *devil*, in the minds of many, he exists only in those old puritanic notions that were long since exploded. No self-denial now—*no crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts* —no painful warfare against sin and Satan—no more need of prayer and watchfulness against the temptations and snares of the world. If we keep up with the age, must we not alter one of *Watts's* stirring hymns, so as to have it read thus?—

I shall be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
Whilst others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas.

There are no foes for me to face;
I must not stem the flood;
This world is now a friend to grace,
To help me on to God.

If this theory of religion, which some are reducing to practice, should be carried out, may we not expect revivals of an improved type? Will not our children and youth learn to *serve God and Mammon* so perfectly, that they will assemble in the dancing school one night, and crowd the inquiry meeting the next, asking with breaking hearts *what they shall do to be saved?*

Let these things, which are growing in many churches in the city, and in the country too,—let them be carried a little further,

and we shall have made the sublime attainment already reached in some cities on the continent of Europe, where under the same roof provision is made for that united service, which, in the text, is pronounced impossible. In one end a *church;* in the other a theatre. In the one place, the people meet Sabbath morning for religious worship; in the other, they assemble in the afternoon for vain amusement and the pleasures of sin. Thus they have learned to *serve God and Mammon;* and not a few in our own land are in danger of imitating this example.

It is time to take a more serious view of this matter. I cannot for a moment suppose that the members of my beloved church regard the Bible as a relic of antiquity merely, unsuited to the present age. You believe that it is the Word of God, a perfect rule of faith and practice for all men in all ages of the world. You have no idea that the disciples of Christ ever have, or ever will be able to *serve God and Mammon.* This is impossible in the very nature of things. I need not stop to show you the difference between the two masters; the difference in their service, and the different results to which it leads. You have an intelligent and correct conviction on these points. These being settled, there are some very solemn and weighty duties that devolve on all the followers of Christ.

I. They should carefully mark the line that divides the church from the world. There is a broad distinction between the people of God and all others. The latter are *dead in trespasses and sins;* whereas the former are *quickened* into life, and made *new creatures in Christ Jesus.* They have *new hearts,* and are renewed in *righteousness and true holiness, after the image of Him who created them.* Having experienced such a great and radical change, it is reasonable to expect in Christians feelings, tastes, desires, aims, and efforts entirely different from those that once characterized them. Mark then, first of all, this difference of character. It is as great as that between light and darkness—between life and death.

Running the dividing line from this starting point, you will be able to discover a difference in the *life* between the church and the world. The reading, the conversation, the pleasures and pursuits of the latter are, in many respects, very unlike those of the former. Christians have *delight in the law of the Lord, and in his law do they meditate day and night.* Sensible that for every *idle word they must give account,* they endeavor to have their conversation *seasoned with salt, that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.* They remember the requirement, that *whether they eat or drink,* or *whatsoever they do, they should do all to the glory of God.* With these principles in mind, the Christian will generally be able to determine questions that may arise respecting duty

and propriety, and draw the line very clearly between the church and the world.

There may be darkness resting upon some high hill, or some deep vale where you cannot discover the line of demarcation. But look up to him who is the Father of lights; He will scatter every cloud—in His light ye shall see light. Search for the line, for it separates between characters, interests, and destinies that are totally unlike. On the one side are saints—on the other sinners. On the one side God—on the other Mammon. On the one side heaven—on the other hell. As you therefore prize the soul, and its immortal well-being, strive to distinguish between the *children of this world* and the children of God.

II. As *ye cannot serve God and Mammon*, be careful and exert all your influence in favor of the service of God. This was one of the leading objects for which Christians were called with an effectual calling. They can meet the world at a thousand points and manifest sympathy, tenderness, and love more than ever. They can be social, cheerful, and obliging; and in all show that the *joy of the Lord is their strength.* They can sustain many intimate relations, and co-operate with the world in many duties; and yet there is an important sense in which they are to *come out from the world and be separate.*

We are surely to have *no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.* Neither are we to have fellowship in any of those amusements that serve to increase the stupidity and moral delirium of the world. There is a strong tide of levity, vanity, and worldliness that is sweeping away all serious reflection, all fear of God, all concern for the soul, and all sense of eternal realities. Now let me ask you, my dear brethren, what is the danger to which religion is now most exposed? Is it *asceticism*—a retired, strict, over-scrupulous regard to Christian duty? Is it not rather a neglect of those duties that distinguish the child of God, and a commingling with the world that is well-nigh fatal to the spirit of piety? Is the church presenting an aspect of religion that is too serious and solemn and self-denying in view of the world? Are Christians spending too much time in prayer—speaking too often one to another about the things of the kingdom, and beseeching sinners too frequently and too earnestly to *become reconciled to God?* Is this the excess of grace that marks the people of God at the present day? Is there not rather a flood of worldly feeling rushing through the bosom of the church, and carrying away much that was fair and lovely? Are we not in great danger of being swallowed up of the world?

I think I know how every fair and serious-minded Christian will answer these inquiries. Be careful then, I entreat you, how you exert your influence. Launch not out upon the dangerous current, lest you glide downward. Let your example be all right.

Let your light so shine before men, that they shall see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Do not approve, nor half endorse these things that intoxicate with worldly pleasure, and serve to deepen the slumbers of moral death. Throw around your brethren in the church—throw around all your fellow-travellers to eternity, those checks and happy influences that will tend to restrain them from the *pleasures of sin*, and lead them to the practice of holiness, *without which no man shall see the Lord.*

In your intercourse with the world, cases may arise in which there shall be doubt about the path of duty, or the extent to which you shall go. Such cases, oftentimes, may be settled by a few simple inquiries. What will be the probable effect on my own spirituality of mind? Might prayer and religious conversation be consistently and appropriately connected with such exercises? Will Christians be improved, and sinners receive a favorable impression respecting their character and their religion; or will Christ be wounded in the house of his friends?

If the mind is not relieved, and the path of duty made plain; let the service of God have the benefit of your doubts. Do not go forward in the dark. If you do, you will fall into condemnation and the snare of the devil. You will wound your conscience, harden your heart, and bring leanness into your soul. If your *brethren* are in doubt about the propriety of a given course, do not disregard their views and their feelings. Serious, praying, working, cross-bearing Christians, very generally entertain such views with regard to certain amusements, as have been expressed by this church and published in their *manual.* They feel that it is *wrong* to engage in them. Now in such cases we are bound to regard the feelings and convictions of our brethren, save when our own minds are free from all difficulty. In the *fourteenth* chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, you will find a principle that is applicable to all such cases. No one is at liberty to trifle with the conscientious scruples and serious convictions of his brethren in Christ. It is better to favor them, and be sure that all our influence is on the side of God, than to seek the friendship of the world by wounding the *household of faith.*

III. The highest excellence of Christian character is attained by complete subjection to the service of God.

Most of those who are hopefully the friends of Christ, are frequently falling back into their former habits, that are inconsistent with their holy profession. They are taken by surprise, if not willingly, by their easily besetting sins. This is not strange, considering the many years they were held in bondage, and led captive by Satan at his will. In that long period sin gained *strong* dominion, and now the principle of grace, if it exist at all, *is comparatively feeble.*

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entreat you to change masters. In your present service you can never experience that peace, joy, liberty, and elevation for which you were made. Mammon will treat you as slaves,—subject you to hard, unrequited toil while you live, and bequeath to you nothing but an inheritance of *woe* when you die. Escape from the house of bondage, and come to the land of the free. Break the yoke of sin, and take the yoke of Christ. You will find it easy, and the burden light. You shall have the *liberty of the sons of God* now, and their glorious kingdom hereafter.

HYMN.

Be thou, O Lord, my treasure here,
And fix my thoughts above;
Unveil thy glories to my view,
And bid me taste thy love.

The world how mean, with all its store,
Compared with thee, my Lord!
Its vain and fleeting joys how few!
How little they afford!

The goods of earth are empty things,
And pleasures soon decay;
Its honors are but noisy breath,
And sceptres pass away.

Ye vain and glittering toys, begone;
Ye false delights, adieu!
My glorious Lord fills all the space,
And leaves no room for you.

—Beddome.

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SERMON DCXLVI.

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MERIDEN, N. H.

THE LOVE OF HOME—ITS INFLUENCE ON RELIGION AND CHARACTER.*

"Wouldst thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people."—2 KINGS iv. 18.

THERE is a sweet and touching simplicity in the answer of the woman of Shunem to the question of Elisha, "Wouldst thou be spoken for to the king or the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people." This reply evinced a mind unsophisticated in the ways of the world; without ambition in respect to its honors and distinction; averse to change; and which found in the common and every-day duties of life, and in its own social and domestic circle, ample scope not only for the exercise of its sympathies and its charities, and the kindly play of those affections which are essential to the formation of virtuous character, but also the highest degree of human happiness. There is great force in the proverb, "Home is home, though ever so homely." It is founded on the great law of Divine Providence, which instituted the domestic institution divided the race into families, and implanted in the human bosom the love of home, of kindred, and of country. Nor is there any thing more pernicious and mischievous than that cosmopolitan philanthropy, which pretending to embrace the world in its affections, contemns this providential arrangement, and would obliterate all ties of kindred, all local attachment which bind us to the place of our

* Preached before the General Association of New Hampshire.

birth, and the sweet and delightful associations, which endear to us the scenes of our early years. Reformers of this stamp would have us attach no peculiar sacredness to parents or friends, to home or country, but would have us cherish the same feelings and the same interest for all men, for all scenes, and for all lands. Equally pernicious too is that *utilitarianism* which regards the world only as a theatre for the display of talent, or the gratification of ambition; or as a field where avarice may reap the richest harvests of wealth, or sensualism secure the most ample means of indulgence.

Now, it may be safely affirmed that he who has never had his feelings intensely excited in favor of individuals, will not feel as he ought towards mankind in general. He who has no strong home attachments, will have no strong attachment; he who has no love of country—will have no proper regard for the world at large.

As we are in great danger of losing sight of first principles amidst the excitements of ambition, the whirl of business, and the allurements of pleasure, it may not be improper on the present occasion to consider the influence which a right home-feeling has upon the interests of religion, the formation of the highest style of virtuous character, and the production of the greatest degree of happiness.

The love of home, of kindred, and of country, though not strictly a religious affection—yet religious affection has such an affinity with it, is so connected with it, touches it at so many points, and depends so much upon it for its full development, that they are rarely, if ever disjoined in the same mind. The love of our friends, of our home, of our country, seems almost a necessary antecedent to the love of God, and the full perfection of the graces of the Spirit. Hence religion never flourishes except in places where the population is permanently established in families; and where the character of the young is moulded by the kindness, the attentions, the instructions, the discipline of parental love, and the associations which cluster around the domestic circle, and the familiar scenes of childhood and youth. There may be exceptions, but so rare as not to affect, the general principle. That the love of kindred, of home, and of country, is essential to the best interests of religion, the highest style of virtuous character, and the production of the greatest amount of happiness enjoyed in our present state. This will appear, if we consider,

I. The peculiar fitness of the family state for the early development and perfection of the natural affections. The family is the only proper school for the natural affections. There the young heart finds something to love and to reciprocate its love in the very infancy of being. It wakes up to consciousness under the smiles and caresses of a mother and the fond endearments of a father. Their expressions of affection call into exercise similar

affections in its own bosom. Nor is the intensity of these feelings dissipated by a multiplicity of objects; nor chilled and repressed by indifference and neglect. The filial and fraternal affections find in a well regulated household, and among brothers and sisters, an atmosphere genial to their growth and expansion. The objects and scenes around the homestead, as they become familiar and associated by pleasant recollections, serve to strengthen these feelings. The house, the garden, the tree, the rock, the brook, the hill, the meadow—where we played in childhood—strengthen the ties of attachment to the friends who form the centre of attraction to our little world of home. Thus silently, and gradually, and sweetly are the natural affections unfolded and strengthened before we go out into the world, to be chilled by its selfishness, or hardened by its depravity and crime. The difference in respect to all that is winning and lovely in natural affections between a child brought up amidst the endearments of a good home and one who has not enjoyed such family nature, is more striking than the most delicious of cultivated fruits and the same fruits in their native wildness. This will appear, if we consider,

II. That home is the best school for early mental training. There is a most important training for the mind before it receives any from the formal processes of education. This training is best received amidst the sweet and delightful associations of home. Our rudimental knowledge is, or might be, best obtained from the lips of a mother or the mouth of a father. For then it is received naturally and cordially, without that tasking and coercion which renders much of what we know like that obtained by Adam in eating the forbidden fruit. For at home, both the mind and the heart are, or ought to be, cultivated at the same time. Hence it is always better for the child to acquire as much of its education as possible under the paternal roof. The growth of the affections then keep pace with the expansion of the mental powers. Knowledge is not divorced from feeling, nor do we have the unnatural spectacle of a head without a heart. This will appear.

III. If we consider the influence of family discipline in regulating and restraining the passions. The constitution of the family implies subjection to their parents on the part of children. Order, therefore, of some kind, is essential to its existence. And where order is properly enforced, the child early learns to submit to the will of another, and to yield obedience to rightful authority. Restraint is imposed upon our wild and wayward propensities; and the passions are curbed and checked before they obtain the complete control of reason and conscience. In every well regulated household authority is blended with affection. Parental love tempers the exercise of power so as to prevent undue

severity ; and filial affection induces the child to yield to the wishes and commands of its parents without imbibing hatred in regard to the authority that enforces obedience. Thus a habit of self-control is early formed, which exerts a salutary influence over the whole subsequent life. It is in the family, if any where, that the passions are so regulated and restrained as to prevent the evils of their excessive indulgence. For though, in many cases, there is an utter failure—and though, in none all that is desirable is secured—yet it is to the family that society owes all its safety from the fury of unkindled passion, and individuals their exemption from the evils which result from unregulated desire. Every good home is a school of discipline for the passions. Its necessary restraints, its constant duties, its varied labours its reciprocal attachments, its mutual conceptions, its common interests, joys, trials, and sorrows, while they do not eradicate, all tend to bring the passions into subserviency to the higher and nobler purposes of existence. This will appear,

IV. If we consider the influence of home in the formation of habits of useful industry. Toil and effort is the price of every thing good or great. The mind cannot be educated without study, nor the body remain sound and vigorous without exercise. The law of labor, therefore, is not only essential to our existence, but also to our happiness. Now, to the end that the law of labor may be cheerfully and sweetly obeyed habits of industry must be formed in early life. And where can this be done so easily and in a manner so likely to secure the great blessings of industry as in the family, amidst the gentle attractions and associations of home ? There the child has, or ought to have, constantly the example and encouragement of those it loves. Its tasks are assigned by those who have, or who should have, a proper regard to its health and strength. Its mistakes are rectified with patience ; its failures are watched with sympathy ; and its successes rewarded with approbation. There labor is so judiciously blended with recreation, that toil does not degenerate into drudgery, nor amusement become an employment. There the habit of industry becomes incorporated with our being ; it accompanies us through life ; it enters into all our pursuits ; it contributes to all our successes, and thus prepares us to find enjoyment in all our efforts Hence,

V. The love of home, of kindred, and of country, calls into exercise some of the highest and noblest qualities of our nature in behalf of their well-being and prosperity. Aside from religion, the brightest page in the annals of our race, is that which is connected with the love of home, of kindred, and of country. Home is or ought to be, the sacred spot where the heart has garnered up its choicest earthly treasures. It is there that virtuous

character is formed. There the natural affections are developed and fostered. There the mind begins to expand; there the passions are regulated and restrained; and there those habits are formed which ensure to industry its honest joys and appropriate rewards. All our sweetest and tenderest recollections and associations are connected with our home.

Now our country is our home, in a wider sense. The very things, therefore, which endear home to us, bind us with strongest cords to our country. The whole land where that home is situated is ours. Its government is ours; its laws are ours. Its defence is the defence of all that we hold most dear. Its prosperity sheds brighter rays of happiness over our own domestic circle. We take a pride in its great names; we imbibe the spirit of its literature; we feel a thrilling interest in the glorious events of its history; we burn with indignation in veiw of its wrongs and injuries. Hence, next to our homes, our greatest sacrifices and self-denials will be in behalf of our country. This rouses to high activity our mental powers; this tasks to the utmost our physical energies. We lay our time, our wealth, and even life itself, on the altar of patriotism.

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land,
When home his footsteps he has turned
From wandering on a foreign strand,
If such there be, go mark him well,
To him no minstrel praises swell.
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim,
Despite his titles, power and pelf,
The wretch concentred all in self,
Living shall forfeit fair renown,
And doubly dying shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung."—*Scott.*

Had there been no home for Washington to love, and in which was laid the foundation of his character, would he have acted the great part he did in our revolutionary contest? Had there been no such homes for the formation of virtuous character as the families of the Pilgrim Fathers and their descendants afforded, would this nation have risen to its present eminence, or would there have been secured to its inhabitants the possession of such blessings as we now enjoy?

VI. This home-feeling affords a soil congenial to the growth of piety, as exhibited in love to God and our neighbour. The love of home and kindred is not religion. Patriotism is not religion. They may exist in a high degree, perhaps, though not in their purest form, in the absence of religious principle. Still it may be doubted whether true religion is ever found to exist in a heart

where the love of home, of kindred, and of country is wanting. The truth is, where the character is wanting in this respect, it is generally wanting in every other. He who is deficient in regard to domestic duties, will always be deficient in regard to his duty to God. The love of God therefore is always associated with the reverence and love of parents. The love of our Maker is ever found in close alliance with love of our kindred. He who cherishes no proper regard for his country, will cherish none for the whole world. I admit that when religion is embraced, and exerts its proper influence on the heart, its tendency is to bring into exercise right feelings in respect to all our civil, social, and domestic relations, even in those who have been wanting in respect to all relative duties. But this only confirms the remark, that love of home, of kindred, and of country, is essential to the formation of virtuous character. Because, religion and philanthropy and patriotism are never long disjoined in the same mind. Besides, those are much less likely to be affected by religious truth who have not been brought up under the influence of a well regulated home; and whose bosoms do not glow with filial and fraternal love, and patriotic devotion. The gospel has always been most successful in places where there are the greatest number of well regulated households; and its most lovely and useful converts are those who have been trained around the domestic fireside, and amid the genial influences and delightful associations of a happy home. That glowing love of home, of friends and country, which produced in the heart of Paul "continual sorrow for his brethren, his kindred according to the flesh," made him just so much the better missionary to the heathen. He who could wish himself "accursed from Christ" for the sake of his own people, was just the man to endure all kinds of privations and hardships, and to occupy any field (and on a very low salary too), in the difficult and toilsome work of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. So it ever has been—so it ever will be. The foundation of the highest style of virtuous character is always laid amidst the sweet and delightful associations of home, of neighborhood, and of country, How sweetly does the religious element blend with the domestic and social affections in the heart of David, whose youth was spent amidst the quiet scenes of Bethlehem and the rural occupations of a shepherd's life! It was the love of home and of country, as well as the love of God, which preserved the piety of the captive Jews amidst the idolatries and corruptions of Babylon. "We wept," said they, "when we remembered Zion." "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning: if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not prefer Jerusalem above my chief joy." What tenderness does patriotism give to the piety of Jeremiah when he exclaims, "O that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might

weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! Our blessed Lord, too, felt as a man and as a patriot, as well as the Saviour of sinners, when he poured out that thrilling lamentation, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" We learn from this subject,

1. The importance of cultivating the love of home and of country. We have seen that the love of home, of kindred, and of country, is essential to the best interests of religion and the formation of the highest style of virtuous character, and production of the greatest degree of happiness. As a matter of course, then it is of the highest importance, that this home feeling should be early developed and fostered. To this end every homestead, should be made as attractive as the nature of the case will admit. A character of permanence should be impressed upon it. It must be something more than a place of business—a mere workshop—all the arrangements of which have reference only to the accumulation of wealth, and all of which may be changed, or parted with at the call of ambition, or avarice, or pleasure. I admire the virtuous and manly decision of Naboth, who would not part with the inheritance of his fathers at the tempting offer of a sum of money, or a better vineyard. There was something about that vineyard dearer to him than money. I love that home feeling conveyed in the words of the text, "I dwell among mine own people." Such a feeling does not regard "creation only as a huge spinning jenny made to twist out fortunes with," "or whose only question in regard to any spot in nature, is, whether it will produce any corn; just as though nature was made only for a cornfield." Or which looks up to the beautiful heavens arched with the lion of sevenfold dies, or beholds the gorgeous tints of the morning and evening sky; the smiling glory of the summer flowers; the varied prospects of hill and valley; of river and lake, of rushing waterfall and sounding sea, and ask with a dry, utilitarian sneer, "to what purpose is this waste?" This home feeling, however, is not the product of direct effort. It is the growth of years; the result of long residence; the interest taken by us in scenes endeared to us by joys and sorrows—by the associations of childhood—by the church where we worshipped—by the school-house where we commenced our education—by the companions of our youth, and by the old grave-yard, the place of our fathers' sepulchres. Now, it is by such influences that the highest style of virtuous character is developed, and moulded into forms of loveliness and beauty. There may be nothing of what the proud man calls greatness in it, or of what the cold hard man of business calls enterprize in it; or of what the cruel, selfish, fashionable voluptury calls pleasure in it; but there is in

it, that which gives the highest charm to the domestic circle which sweetens the intercourse of social life; which constitutes the untameable energies of a nation's strength, and which proves a fount of living waters to the church of God. I have no sympathy, therefore, for that system of education, coming more and more into vogue, which so disjoins the head from the heart, the understanding from the conscience, as to call it superstition, should any refuse

"To peep and botanize upon his mother's grave."

Or which, while standing in the midst of the grand scenes of nature, instead of regarding with delight its great outlines, or more lovely features, is ever looking about for specimens and pebble stones. And I abhor from my inmost soul, that last and foulest spawn of infidelity and atheism, which would dismantle the homestead, break up the family state, confound the stations and duties of man and woman, and thus rob the domestic circle of all its sweet and blessed attractions and associations. This subject points out—

2. *One great source of national degeneracy and corruption* Time was when the population of our country was homogeneous, when there was a marked similarity of customs and manners; when there was such permanency of residence, as gave time for the development and growth of a home-feeling in the minds of the young; when children and youth were not enticed from home or the family state, till the natural affections were fully expanded, nor till the character was formed, and the habits fixed.

But the opening of the boundless regions of the West—the annexation of foreign territory—the introdction of vast masses of foreigners—the construction of rail-roads—the establishment of factories, and the many and various methods of speculation, holding out temptations to avarice, and enterprise, and ambition are producing, for the present at least, an unsettled state of things, unfavorable to the development and growth of the higher qualities of our nature. The consequence is, we are losing the genial hospitality of early times; simplicity of manners are everywhere giving place, not to true politeness, but to artificial rules; the unsophisticated feelings of our rural population are fast becoming superceded by the impertinences and conceitedness of the worst part of city, village, and factory life. There are so many novelties to call us away from home; the facilities of travel are so increased, that we are tempted to be constantly on the move. And, indeed, many are constantly on the move. We are losing our interest in localities, except such as fashion deifies, or dissipation renders attractive. We have no peculiar regard for home; and the place of our birth is endeared to us by no sweet and

tender recollections and associations. We are in danger, therefore, of becoming gregarious, but not social; knowing without knowledge; excitable, without true feeling; and in many cases religious, without religion. That deep love of home and kindred, which once a year brought the whole family together on the New England festival of Thanksgiving, and made it a scene of joyousness and gratitude, is now looked upon by many, almost as a remnant of superstition. Hence so many early learn to sacrifice home, kindred, friends, conscience, honesty, religion, at the shrines of ambition, of avrice, of fashion, and of pleasure. The heart having no centre of attraction, nothing in which the affections becoming rooted, and around which its tendrils entwine, looks abroad for excitement, seeks happiness in novelty, in adventure in speculation, in party politics, and too often, in the most criminal excesses. Too many of our youth prefer any place to home; and too many, both young and old, are ever ready to sacrifice it, and go to Texas, to California, to Oregon, to Australia to the city, or the factory, rather than engage in the domestic labors of the family, or the rural occupation of the farm, and thus settle down amidst the quiet scenes of their birth place. Our habits, our feelings, our spirits are becoming so mercenary and grasping, as to produce perpetual collision between the employer and the employed. We seldom see now in our families any specimens of—

"The constant service of the antique world,
When service sweat for duty, not reward.
But the fashion of the times is such
That none will sweat but for promotion,
And having that, do choke the service up,
Even with the having."

The want of this home-feeling, therefore, and the wide prevalance of a mercenry spirit, produces a constant desire of change, leads to the indulgence in ruinous excesses, and the perpetration of great crimes. A floating population can never long be either moral or religious. The graces of character, the training of the intellect, the cultivation of the affections, which are the product of home influences and established institutions, will never be found among those who have no other ties than ambition, or interest, or fashion, or pleasure. This accounts for that seething and turmoil of the social elements in western and south-western society, and among our frontier settlements, resulting in heterogeneous forms of error, and in scenes of crime and blood. The mobs, and riots, and murders in our cities; the strikes in our cities and manufacturing villages, the brutal scenes at elections, and on our railroads; the reckless disregard of life on railroads and steamboats, may generally be traced to a population, floating, restless, dissatisfied, and over whom the home feeling, and the influences and associations of home have lost their restraint. Hence we learn,

3. The cause of that discontent, which makes so many in our churches dissatisfied with their condition, producing such constant removals, as to reduce many churches, once flourishing, to a state of weakness and dependence. This at the present time is one of the great obstacles which religion has to encounter. For it is not true, that what is lost in one part is made up in another. The loss of an efficent church in the older States is not compensated by the formation of several starvelings in the new, composed not of new converts, but of members, who too often have gone there under the influence of a worldly, mercenary spirit. For while the old church might have sustained itself, and aided efficiently in sending the Gospel to the destitute, both at home and abroad, these new churches are dependent on foreign aid for their existence and means of support, thus increasing the demands for help, while they are diminishing the means of supply. One productive labour is worth hosts of alms-fed consumers. And though it is hoped and believed that our new churches will in time become fellow-helpers in benevolent effort yet, if in the mean time, New England and the Middle States should become missionary fields, would not far more be lost than gained to our common christianity?

But aside from this—this restlessness and desire of change, has its origin, in too many cases, in wicked feelings and a radical mistake. There is a natural and proper desire in the human heart to better our circumstances and improve our condition. This may be innocently indulged when the nature of true happiness is understood, and the right means used to secure it. But the mistake has usually been, that men have sought it in wrong objects, and by wrong measures. Men have sought happiness too much in objects extraneous and foreign to themselves, and not in those within and around them. *Place* has very little to do with enjoyment, aside from right feelings and right disposition and the influences and associations suited to develope and foster them. Hence, wealth, and honor, and sensual indulgences, when sought as an end, instead of conferring happiness, only increase the misery and disquietude of the soul. The elements of true happiness are few, obvious, and simple, and generally lie within the reach of all. They consist in the exercise of right moral affections, in the acquisition of useful knowledge, and in some useful employment, which, while it keeps the body vigorous, does not overtask its energies, nor load the mind with vexations and harassing cares. Now, with rightly constituted mental powers and moral affections, it will ever be found, that any eligible spot, where we can fix our residence, and to which we become attached by family ties, by home influences, by neighborhood associations, and by the means of intellectual and moral improvement, will furnish all the enjoyment which may reasonably be expected in this world. Now where, and especially in New

England and the Middle States, may not this be done? What people were ever placed in circumstances more favorable for the development of the highest qualities of the mind and the heart, and the enjoyment of the greatest degree of happiness to be found on earth? Why is there, then, especially in our churches, so much restlessness and discontent? Simply because men are looking away from home for those materials of happiness and means of improvement which are lying all around them. The still small voice of wisdom is drowned in the noise of the world's voices, as it comes to them in the reports of the gold fields of the Orient or the Occident; or in the roar and bustle of the crowded city, or the hum of machinery in the shops and factories, or thunders along the railway, or creaks in the strained cordage of the ships, or departing and returning commerce; or glitters in the pomp and circumstance of war; or is heard at the bar, and in halls of legislation; or rises with "music's voluptuous swell" in the saloons of fashion, or breaks out in the loud revelries of the votaries of dissipation and vice. What seems so full of life and enjoyment they think must be so indeed. But alas, they do not consider how little of true happiness there is to be found in the great world; in its noise, its bustle, its enterprise, its changes, its revelries, its honors, its ambition. They never reflect how little of true happiness there is away from the domestic circle, and apart from scenes endeared to us by the ties of kindred, by the sweet associations of home, and by the hallowed influences of religion. They forget that things most essential to our happiness and to the highest perfection of our nature, are those which money cannot buy, nor power confer, nor sensual indulgences produce. They are not to be found in courts and camps, in marts of business, in posts of honor and profit, in scenes of fashion and dissipation, in genial climates and fertile plains, or where "rivers flow o'er sands of gold." But they are found wherever there is a quiet home, an enlightened mind, and a humble, contrite, grateful heart. In the pictures drawn by the sacred writers of Christ's millennial reign, it is described as a state of universal peace, of permanent residence, of humble virtues, of universal knowledge of God and his word. *For then they shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat. For as the days of a tree are the days of my people; and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.*

SERMON DCXLVII.

BY REV. LEWIS H. REID,*

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PIETY IN THE AGED.

"And she was a widow of about four score and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day."
LUKE ii. 37.

The is recorded of Anna the prophetess, who like the aged Simeon, was waiting for the consolation of Israel. Like him she was eminently devout, manifesting her piety in a faithful attendance upon the services of the temple, and in fastings and prayers continually. Three verses furnish all that we know of her history, and yet who would not prefer to have such a memoir of himself written than the volumes which set forth the exploits of a Napoleon or an Alexander? The pen of inspiration, it is a noticeable fact, is always very brief in portraying the lives and characters of those who have figured in sacred history. Of Enoch it was enough to say that, "he walked with God, and was not, for God took him." What a volume is this in itself! Of some, simply the name is mentioned. But to have one's name written on the leaf of God's holy word is a more enduring monument than if it were chiselled in adamantine rock or graven deep on brazen tablets. In the ruins of ancient Babylon a huge palace has been discovered built of bricks. Upon each of these bricks the same characters are impressed, which, it has been discovered, are the letters of the name "Nebuchadnezzar!" Thus did this proud monarch seek to glorify himself, and thus has he actually perpetuated his name in earthen structures through a period of two thousand five hundred years. But the implements of the antiquarian have at length exhumed those bricks, and now with the palace which they composed must they crumble to the dust! No such fate, however, befals the glorious monument which inspiration has reared. The name writter *once here*, is more honorable and lasting than though it were repeated a thousand times on the proudest structures of man's rearing. Indeed the very decay of Assyrian and Egyptian palaces and temples, goes to show not only how truthful, but also how *indestructible* a monument is the Sacred Word.

The subject which the text naturally suggests is *piety in the*

*Preached on occasion of the death of a pious widow, aged *nearly* 85 years

aged. In considering this subject, it is worthy of note, first, that—

I. Piety in the aged confirms and illustrates the promise which God has made of long life to those who fear his name. Every where throughout the Scriptures "length of days" is spoken of as an eminent blessing. Thus, in the fifth commandment, we read, "Honor thy father and thy mother, *that thy days may be long upon the land* which the Lord thy God giveth thee." The Psalmist writes, "He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even *length of days* for ever and ever." To those who "set their love" upon God and "call upon him," it is promised, "With *long life* will I satisfy him and show him my salvation." So also, it is written, "My son forget not my laws; but let thy heart keep my commandments; for *length of days* and *long* life and peace shall they add to thee." And again; "Behold that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord. The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yes, thou shalt see thy *children's children*, and peace upon Israel." The patriarchs are regarded as having been highly favored in this respect, and hence the exact age to which they attained is mentioned as of especial note. The last words written with regard to Job, are, "After this lived Job a hundred and forty years and saw his sons, and his son's sons, even four generations. So Job died being old and full of days." The last that is recorded with regard to Joseph is that he saw Ephraim's children of the third generation, and also those of Manasseh, and that he died being 110 years old. The prophet Isaiah, in describing the effects which the reign of the Messiah would have, writes, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old." "They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the *days of a tree* are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands," The comparison is apt--for some trees, the oak, cypress, cedar and others, attain to a great age. Adamson, who lived in the last century, a botanist and student of natural history, mentions one tree in Senegal which he judged to be over 5000 years old. There is a tree in Mexico which some are of the opinion is still more aged,* A section of the cedar from California, which was judged to be 3000 years old. we have some of us seen.

But while length of days is spoken of in the Scriptures as a blessing, you will notice that it is always associated with *piety and obedience*. Thus it was said to Israel, when they were about to enter the promised land, "I command thee this day to

*Barnes, Notes on Isaiah lxv. 22.

love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply; and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thy heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I denounce unto you this day that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not *prolong your days* upon the land whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it."

There are many passages, also, which set forth the same truth on the other hand, such for example as these? "The wicked shall be cut off from the earth and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it." "Yea the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him." "He shall be driven from light into darkness and chased out of the world. He shall neither have son nor nephew among his people, nor any remaining in his dwellings." "But thou O God shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction—bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days."

When, then, we see the lives of the pious spared and lengthened out what an illustration and corroboration is this of the divine promise with regard to such. How does God seem to make his own word good! What a living exemplification do those have of the declaration, "Trust in the Lord and do good so shalt thou *dwell in the land*, and verily thou shalt be fed."

II. Again, Piety in the aged crowns those who possess it with *especial honor*. The hoary head is always represented in the Scriptures as a valuable and honorable possession. Thus we read, "The glory of young men is their strength, and the beauty of old men is the gray head." We find, also, the "*ancient*" numbered with the "honorable," and have especial injunctions with regard to the manner in which the aged should be treated. "Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old." "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honor the face of the old man." God also links respect for age with his own fear, for he adds immediately to the words last quoted, "and fear thy God." The sin of despising aged persons is particularly noticed. Isaiah, in describing the calamities which were to come upon the Jews, mentions this among other things: "The child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient." Similar disrespect for the prophet Elisha on the part of the children who cried as he went up into Bethel, "Go up thou bald head," was terribly punished by the appearance of two she bears who tare forty and two of their number in pieces! Wisdom and experience are justly supposed to belong to the aged. "With the ancient is wisdom and in length of days un-

derstanding." A respect for this wisdom might have saved to Rehoboam, who "forsook the old men's counsel and spake after the counsel of the young men," his life and his kingdom.

But age is never so honorable as when it is accompanied by *piety*. "The hoary head (it is written) is a crown of glory, if it *be found in the way of righteousness*." This latter constitutes the jewel in the crown. It is this which gives to it especial value and makes it truly honorable. The patriarch Jacob wore this crown with the jewel mentioned, and received the homage of Pharaoh, a heathen king. Samuel possessed the same, and when he died was followed to the grave with the lamentations of the entire Jewish nation. Elisha was in like manner distinguished. When in his last sickness, he was visited by Joash, a wicked and idolatrous king, who wept over his face, and said, "O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." Of Jehoida the priest it is written to the honor of his piety. "And they buried him in the city of David, among the kings, because he had done good in Israel both toward God and toward his house." These are but illustrations of the high regard which piety in the aged generates, The reasons for this high regard are to be found in the respect which piety itself commands, in the fact that it is associated with age, experience, and wisdom—in the fact, also, that it has had longer opportunity to grow—has greater depth of root and strength of fibre—is more mature, intelligent, comprehensive. And does it not receive additional honor from the fact that it is so near to its culmination? Do not the glistening hairs of pious age derive brightness and glory from their nearness to the unfading and everlasting crown? The bride who is hastening to the altar never looked so sweetly before—the student who has finished a long course of study and is about to receive his honors, attracts to himself especial attention. Is it not so somewhat with the aged christian who is a candidate *for*, and is very near to, the glories and rewards of heaven? Separate, however, heavenly virtues from the hoary head, and the jewel is gone—the crown is fallen. For where can you behold a more "lamentable spectacle than a greeless old man only gaining by his score of years a proportionate score of guilt?" The white hairs of the ungodly only bespeak ripeness for wrath—wrath treasured up during all the long past against the issues of the final day. "The sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed."

III. Piety in the aged *commends religion to others*. The counsels of age and experience, men will heed if they will heed any thing. They are prone in emergencies to seek the advice of those who have lived longer, and have more knowledge than themselves. They attach weight to what is told them—receive it as from wise lips, and are very likely to act in accordance with it. In a similar manner great weight is given to the counsels of aged and devoted christians.

It is known that they speak intelligently, dispassionately wisely. They have had experience. They know what they affirm. They feel its importance. Then, again, the fact that they are so near to eternity makes them serious and earnest in what they say, and at the same time awakens a more respectful hearing on the part of those to whom they speak. Their words have something of the same weight which the words of dying men have. They come from the heart, and are received very generally with solemnity and attention. Added to this is the savor of their *example*. They conform to the exhortation of the Apostle, and possess the characteristics therein described, "That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things." There is more to cause them to be consistent than is the case with the younger. Their passions are less strong; they mingle less in the engagements and turmoil of business; they have fewer perplexities and cares, and are less beset by temptation, have been longer trained in the school of Christ; and besides all this, are constantly admonished by the fact, that while others *may*, they *must* soon die. These and other things tend to make them more watchful of their example, and to exhibit a character for spotleseness and worth, which the younger may well emulate. Thus Paul wrote; "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." But not only by their words and example do the pious aged commend religion to others, but also by the *particular testimony* which their conduct affords, by their steadfastness and adherence to the faith—by the appreciation and felt necessity of religion, which they exhibit in their own case. To see aged Christians abounding in acts of devotion, assures one that they have not *grown weary in well doing*—that they do not feel themselves *above* these exercises, or *past* them, but that they take more and more pleasure in them, and feel more and more the need of them as they come nearer to heaven. In this respect they speak in an impressive manner to the world. They seem to say, "We have learned by a long experience, that religion is just what we need; and now, instead of giving it up, we mean to cherish it the more. We want it, we find, in all the trials and conflicts of this life; we want it in our present infirmities, and we shall want it yet more in the dying hour. Part with it? Never! The longer we live, the more we prize it. The more new and unusual our experience, the more necessary and precious do we find it to be. Thus does every aged Christian, in the course which he himself pursues, preach a sermon, as it were, to those around him. He says for substance; "You see how I feel, and what I do; will it not be wise and prudent in you to feel and do likewise?"

The novice in matters pertaining to the sea, would naturally

inquire of some experienced shipmaster, with what equipments he should furnish his vessel; and if repeated trials had convinced the one whose advice he sought, that certain articles were indispensable, he would be sure to obtain these at the outset of the voyage. So should the advice of those be heeded who have sailed longest on the sea of time. And if they say it is certain destruction to sail without religion at the helm—say this by the course which they themselves pursue, is not their opinion entitled to much weight? Should it not be heeded; and may they not in this way accomplish much good?

IV. Finally, Piety in the aged furnishes a beautiful illustration of the maturity and ripeness of christian character. "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." There is constant growth and progress in the divine life. We are at first but *babes* in Christ Jesus, and reach at length the stature of full grown men. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs." "For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." The piety of the aged is the full corn in the ear. It is fully ripe. So said Eliphaz to Job; "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season." Consider through what a process of cultivation and growth the aged christian has passed! Through what diversified scenes and experiences have the long years carried him! Think of the rains, the storms, the sunshine under which his piety has been made to grow; the trials, afflictions, disappointments, and losses that have darkened his way; the glad and happy hours that have at times dispelled the darkness, and shed sunlight upon his heart. Think of all the changes, of every name and form, that he has passed through, and see how all have been like the numberless influences of nature that develope and ripen the grain for the harvest. "There was first the blade, then the ear, and now the full corn in the ear." Contemplate such a christian; his work all done; the great object of life accomplished—its end secured—his course finished with joy, the faith kept, and he ready to be offered. How interesting the spectacle! How appropriately compared to a shock of corn fully ripe "in his season." And when he falls how truthfully may it be said of him:—

> "Of no distemper, of no blast he died,
> But full like autumn fruit that mellowed long,
> Even wondered at because he dropped no sooner,"

1. A general inference from the considerations offered, is, that we should imitate the pious aged. If we would obtain the promise of long life ourselves, enjoy an *honored* and *useful* old age,

and come down at length to the grave like "a shock of corn fully ripe, we must follow in the steps of those of whom we have been speaking. And we are to remember that whatever our old age is to be, it rests with us now to determine. We are sowing the seeds of that future harvest. The tree that is stunted and deformed in its earlier years will generally carry the crookedness into its maturer growth. Let us now, then, see to it, that we lay not up any thing in store which will subsequently bring us pain.

2. Again, how thankful should the children of pious and aged parents be—thankful that they are the children of such parents—thankful that they have enjoyed their training influence and example—thankful that they have had an opportunity to recompense them somewhat for the care, attention, and love bestowed—thankful that they have been spared to share in their own honors and enjoyments—thankful for the good evidence of piety which they furnished—thankful for the cheering and comforting hope which they have left, that they are happy with their God.

3. The departure of aged Christians from our midst reminds us who remain that the ranks before us are thinning out, and that we are pressing up to the fore-front of the line. We should see to it, then, that we have their piety, and can honor their place (if we are spared to reach it) as they have honored it themselves. Then, when we fall, it will be with as much to comfort our surviving friends, and with as firm and substantial a hope of heavenly rest and joy. Young or old, we must all soon die. Oh! that we may be prepared, and like the pious who have gone before us, realize for ourselves the truthfulness of the statement, that "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

SERMON DCXLVIII.

BY REV. JUSTUS DOOLITTLE,

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IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD.

"Thy kingdom come."—MATT. vi. 10.

That it is natural for man to pray, all history furnishes evidences. The universal prevalence of supplication offered to idols and spirits in heathen countries and the experience of all in times of sudden and imminent danger, or of alarming sickness, prove it. Prayer is also a revealed duty. The Bible gives important instructions in relation to its nature and right performance. It teaches us that there is only one Being to whom prayer, as a religious act, may be addressed, and instructs us in various passages, in regard to the different objects for which prayer should be offered to that Being. The text illustrates these remarks, inasmuch as it brings to our notice that Being, and is itself a prayer for a specific object. That Being is the only true and living God; and the text is a prayer for the coming of his kingdom on the earth.

The words, "Thy kingdom come." do not relate to any form of temporal or secular government. They do not contemplate the re-establishment among men of the ancient Jewish theocracy, or the advent of Christ as a temporal prince. God's kingdom is "not of this world," else would his servants fight with carnal weapons, in order to extend its boundaries and vanquish his enemies. It is not worldly in its origin, its nature, its design, or its mode of administration. The text exclusively relates to the spiritual reign of God in the hearts of men. It implies that Satan has usurped dominion over the human race. It would reinstate God in his rightful sovereignty. It breathes an aggressive spirit against the empire of Satan; and as long as he has any willing subjects, or as long as there is any error, or wrong, or corruption on the earth, so long will it be proper to offer the petition for the coming of the kingdom of God. So long as there is any thing loved which is sinful in its nature, or any thing practiced which is defiling in its influence, any where in the world, so long will it be binding on those who love truth, who practice righteousness, to pray to the Supreme and Holy One, "Thy kingdom come." It implores the actual re-establishment of the reign of Him who is the Son of Righteousness and the Prince of Peace every where in the affections of men. It is a *prayer for the conversion of the world.*

This discourse will be devoted to the consideration of *the importance of prayer for the conversion of the world.* I remark that the importance of such prayer is seen—

1. *In the fact that Christ directed his disciples to make it.*

This direction occurs once in that part of the sermon which our Saviour delivered to his disciples while he was on the Mount of Beatitudes, called the Lord's Prayer. The language which he then employed is that of the text. "Thy kingdom come." Luke informs us that as Christ was praying in a certain place, one of his disciples recollecting that John the Baptist gave direction to his followers in regard to the duty of prayer, and desiring to receive some instruction from the Saviour in regard to the same duty, said unto him when he ceased, "Lord teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples." In the instructions which our Saviour gave in compliance with this request, occurs again the identical expression which constitutes our text—"Thy kingdom come." From these references to the Scriptures, we may learn the mind and will of our Lord in relation to this subject. It is sufficiently evident from them that he desired his followers should pray for the coming of God's reign in the hearts of men. We may also learn from a notice of the immediate connection in which the text is found in both of these places, the importance which he attached to prayer. In both it is the second petition which Christians are directed to present. Next in order after the introductory phrase or invocation, Our Father who art in heaven, comes a petition that his name may be hallowed among men, and then the petition for the coming of His kingdom on the earth. This circumstance teaches us that the coming of God's kingdom was an object whose attainment lay near to the heart of Jesus. Be it remembered that it was so dear to him that in the very commencement of the directions he gave his followers in relation to prayer, he instructed them to pray to their Heavenly Father, for the attainment of that object. From this circumstance, may we not learn that this object should be dear to our hearts?

Let us not, however, fall into the error of inferring from it, that we are to pray for the swift spread and triumph of Christianity over every false system of religion in the *beginning* of our petition to the throne of grace. We may not infer this any more than we may infer that we are to use precisely the language found in Christ's directions. It is not to be believed that the Lord's prayer was designed as a form for invariable use. It is evidently intended to be studied merely as a model or pattern, according to the spirit of which Christians were to be guided in their approaches to God. This is made known from the introductory remarks to the Lord's prayer, especially informing us that we are to pray simply "*after this manner.*" We may consequently clothe our desires for the

salvation of men, and the conversion of the world, in any suitable language, and express them in any part of our prayers we choose, and they will be acceptable to God. But we may not forget that in accordance with the directions of our Saviour, it is our duty to offer in some part of our petitions to the mercy seat, and in some appropriate words, our ardent longings for the coming of God's kingdom every where on the earth.

II. In the good influence it exerts over those who offer it in sincerity and in earnest.

Frequent and ardent prayer in behalf of any object, has a good reflex influence on the offerer. It directs and controls in a great measure his conduct relating to the attainment of that particular object, inspires in him a greater interest in all that concerns it, and prompts to increased efforts to promote and secure it. The pastor who wrestles with God often and earnestly in secret prayer in behalf of his people, will be very likely to labor with a warmer heart, and with more zealous efforts to promote their spiritual welfare, than though he seldom or never thus prayed. His prayers for the flock, over which God has made him shepherd, will have a good and great reflex influence on himself. As he addresses them from the sacred desk, as he leads them in the devotional exercises of the sanctuary, as he mingles with them in the bosoms of their families, and as he walks by the wayside in their company, he will strive to accomplish that for which he so ardently and so frequently prays in secret at home. The feelings of his soul will continually seek a development in appropriate actions for the spiritual good of his pastoral charge.

The mother who ardently longs for the conversion of her son, and who frequents her closet to spend an hour there in its silence and solitude bowed in prayer before God in his behalf, will be most sure to manifest in her actions a deep and sincere interest in his salvation. Faithfully, yet kindly and winningly as only a mother can she will tell him of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, warn him of the danger of continued impenitency, and point him to Christ as the only hope of the sinner. With a tearful eye, and with a faltering voice she will endeavor to lead him to the Saviour. In her conversation with him, and in her deportment towards him, on every suitable occasion, she will exhibit her intense desire that he should become a Christian.

Similar will be the reflex influence of frequent and earnest prayer for the evangelization of the world over those who offer it. It will prompt them to corresponding and appropiate action for the attainment of the desired object. Those who pray with their whole souls, "Thy kingdom come," will be ready to do according to their ability in some effective way for the hastening of the universal prevalence of God's spiritual reign on the earth. If their hearts are pervaded with the spirit of this petition, they will desire to perform all within their power, in order to promote the conversion of the world, either by the exertion of personal influence and personal labor, or by contributing liberally of the property which has been entrusted to their stewardship. There is a great and fast increasing demand on Christendom, at the present time, for a multitude of men, and a large amount of funds to be employed in the work of evangelizing the nations. To every heathen country on the globe, with one or two exceptions, the Christian missionary has free access; and from many a pagan land, in loud and urgent tones, comes the Macedonian cry unto the churches, "Come over and help us." The supply of men and of money needed to meet the present, and the future demands for help made by a perishing world, will not be found till the churches shall offer with becoming earnestness and frequency, the prayer to the God of Missions. "Thy kingdom come." When she thus prays, the wants of pagan nations will not long remain unsupplied. The appeal sent to her from China, from Hindostan, from Palestine, from Persia, from Turkey, from Southern and Western Africa, and from different parts of Europe and America, will then find a response in many a pious heart. To the voice of the Lord, heard in his providence saying, "Whom shall I send?" many a reply will be made in the language of the prophet, "Here am I: send me." The petition, "Thy kingdom come," pro-

ceeding to the Father from the heart of the church with one united and fervent voice, while it would be accepted by Him, would have a very salutary reflex influence over her. It would be partly answered in leading her to devote a multitude of her sons and her daughters to the work of "going into all the world and preaching the Gospel to every creature." The plea of men dying for lack of knowledge in heathen countries, wafted to the ear of Christendom by every breeze that fans the ocean's bosom, would not be made in vain, but the returning wave would bear to them a vessel freighted with the bread of life.

As well might we expect that the pastor who wrestles with God in importunate prayer in behalf of his flock, would leave it to perish without making earnest personal efforts for its salvation, or that the mother who often and ardently prays in secret for the conversion of her son, would exhibit a stolid indifference in relation to the interests of his soul, as that those who supplicate the throne of grace with frequent and fervent petitions for the evangelization of the world, would neglect to use the other appropriate and necessary means for its attainment. As personal labor is one of the divinely appointed agencies for saving men, there may be readily found the needed number of men willing to consecrate themselves to the work of missions. But not only would such prayer offered by the church lead many to labor *in person* in the work of conveying the Gospel to heathen lands, it would also result in furnishing the needed amount of funds to prosecute with becoming vigor the divine enterprise of converting the world. It would infuse into the hearts of those who remain at home a spirit of benevolance and liberality commensurate with the magnitude of the undertaking, and worthy of the glorious triumph over sin it contemplates.

Now it is doubtless true that some give to the cause of missions who pray little or none at all for the success of that cause. Giving to promote the coming of God's kingdom in the hearts of men, is often neither preceded nor accompanied, nor followed, by earnest prayer for that object on the part of the giver. But it is believed that sincere and ardent *praying* for the conversion of the world is ever attended by *giving*, according to ability, for the promotion of that enterprise. He who engages in present and importunate supplication in behalf of the heathen, will not be likely to return a negative reply when solicited on suitable occasions to contribute of his substance to send them the Gospel. He will not shun the sanctuary when he expects an opportunity will be presented for him to make an expression of his desire for their salvation, by casting into the Lord's treasury such an amount as the voice of God's word, in view of the urgent need of lost men, shows to be his duty. Nor will he give grudgingly for this purpose. He will do it cheerfully, willingly, with satisfaction and with pleasure; will not only love to pray for the pagan world, but will also love to aid missions, as far as he can, consistently with his other duties as a Christian. Frequent and earnest prayer for the evangelization of the world, is therefore highly important, inasmuch as it exerts a salutary reflex influence on those who offer it, leading some to devote themselves in person to the work of missions, and others to furnish the requisite amount of funds to promote its attainment.

III. In the encouragement it affords those who have consecrated themselves to labor in person for that object.

It is of great practical interest to the minister of the Gospel to know that the church to which he preaches the word of life, remembers him frequently and fervently in her prayers. We are all, probably, well aware how encouraging and gratifying it is to the pastor of any people to be assured that they ardently supplicate for him as they bow around the family and in the closet. Such knowledge is the source of much comfort and hope to him in the discharge of his arduous duties. He can preach and labor more effectively, than if he was without their sympathy and forgotten in their prayers. It imparts a cheerfulness to his feelings, and thus, while it materially promotes his usefulness as a minister, greatly increases his happiness as a man.

So it is of great practical interest to the missionary of the cross to know that the church generally pray with an appropriate fervency for the conversion of the

world,and especially to know that those Christians with whom he is personally acquainted in his native land, remember him and pray with earnestness in his behalf. Such knowledge must, in the very nature of the case, afford him peculiar encouragement to labor with ardent zeal and unremitting cheerfulness in the hope of being instrumental in the conversion of some of the heathen among whom he lives. Consider for a moment the circumstances in which a foreign missionary is situated. He is far away from his native land, his home and his kindred, and from those who sympathise with him in his trials and in his toils. He is surrounded with strangers. He as access to little or no congenial society. Those with whom he mingles are mostly vile and ignorant, often ungrateful, perhaps disposed to misrepresent his motives,and place a false construction on his actions. It is true that he feels that he is discharging his duty to the heathen and to his God. and is assured that he has the approbation and blessing of his Father in Heaven. Still, it is as natural as it is reasonable for him to cast a frequent thought across the ocean to the port where he once lived, and where he left many loved friends, with whom he ofter took sweet christian counsel, and bowed in prayer together. The knowledge that they yet remember him, and pray for him, when no ear hears them and no eye sees them but God's ; at the time of the morning and the evening sacrifice. and in the monthly concert. will constantly produce great joy in his heart, and afford great encouragement to him as he labors on in some humble station in the hope of winning heathen souls to Christ. He loves to recall his former Christian friends, and his thoughts linger about, them because he feels that they must be still interested in the missionary work, and delight to pray for its rapid success.

But suppose that in some way he should ascertain that the church with which he was connected in his native land,and those Christian friends with whom he was personally and intimately acquainted, restrained prayer in behalf of the world, and that they neglected or forgot often and ardently to remember him in his toils and trials, his perils and self-denials, what feelings of lonliness and desertion would fill his heart ! How would his soul be disquieted within him ! With how little encouragement could he labor, except as he himself derived it from the throne of grace in answer to his own agonizing prayers ! The smiles of his Heavenly Father would now be his only joy and hope, and the promises of the Bible his only rock of consolation. He would not be alone. Oh no : for the blessed Saviour has assured him " Lo I am with you alway." Nevertheless he would feel that a great, and in some respects an essential, element of his happiness and his usefulness was wanting. Oh, how deep and keen would be his feelings as his thoughts travel back to those whom he left in his native land. and contemplate their want of interest in the work of missions, as evidenced by the fewness and the coldness of their prayers in his behalf. I recollect reading, several years since, of a missionary and his wife in the foreign field, who had just received a long expected letter from home. The wife, in high spirit hastily broke the seal, and began to glance over the contents. She had read but a few moments, when the letter fell from her hands, and she burst into tears. Her husband, supposing it contained intelligence of some alarming sickness or sudden death among her personal friends, and preparing to remind her of the hopes and the consolations which only the Gospel affords to the sorrowing and the afflicted, kindly enquired the cause of this strong emotion. He at length learned that the letter communicated the news of the suspension of the prayer meetings in the village where her parents resided. And added the wife, when her tears and her sobs allowed her to speak again. " *We had better go home. It is of no use to remain here unless our friends can pray for us.*" Similar, I doubt not, would be the feelings with which his heart would be pervaded, and similar the conclusion to which he would come, of many a missionary in a heathen land, should he become convinced that the church generally, and that his personal christian friends particularly, for any reason, failed to pray with frequency and fervency for those who are devoting their lives to the work of evangelizing the world. It is, then, highly important that frequent and earnest prayer for the coming of God's kingdom on the earth should be made by the Christian,

nasmuch as it affords great and peculiar encouragement to those who are laboring directly to promote that object.

IV. *Prayer is the only effectual means of bringing down God's blessing upon us.*

We have thus far considered prayer for the conversion of the world as an important duty of the Christian arising from the directions of Christ to his disciples from the good reflex influence it produces on the offerer, and from the encouragement it affords those who labor for the evangelization of the heathen. We now contemplate it for a moment as absolutely indispensable in the divine economy, from the fact that it is the only effectual means of bringing down God's blessing on efforts put forth for the conversion of men. This is the strongest and most important argument which can possibly be urged in favor of frequent and earnest prayer for the speedy coming of the reign of righteousness on the earth. Without such prayer offered by the disciples of Christ, Satan's empire will never be demolished, nor God's spiritual kingdom be established. Success will not be granted to the personal labors of Christians to evangelize the heathen, and all pecuniary contributions for that object will be also in vain, unless the fervent, effectual prayer which avails much with God, shall ascend to him from the Church. "I have planted," said Paul, "Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." Such was the experience of Christians 1800 years ago, and such has been the experience of Christians since that period, and such will ever be the experience of those who are "laborers together with God," in the work of evangelizing the world. For "neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase," The most wisely directed efforts have never resulted in the conversion of men, independent of the operation of the Holy Spirit; and they will never result in the salvation of a single soul, except as a blessing from above shall be added to them. All means within the control of man will prove powerless and unavailing to rescue the heathen from sin, unless grace from the Most High shall render them effectual in leading them to the Saviour. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." The missionary aims at producing spiritual results. Now the Holy Spirit is the divine agent, whose presence and authority are needed to sanction and confirm all human efforts, in order that they may be successful in securing these results; and prayer, sincere and importunate prayer, is the appointed means of causing the descent of this Agent.

"Who but thou, Almighty Spirit,
Can the heathen world reclaim?
Men may preach but till thou favor,
Heathens will be still the same."

From these remarks, the relation which frequent and prevailing supplication sustains to the efficacy of human means for the conversion of the race, will be evident to all. In the economy of the divine government, it is of indispensable importance, in order that the smiles of God may attend and succeed the labors of his children to restore this revolted world to its allegiance to its rightful sovereign. It is especially necessary to urge the importance of earnest prayer for the evangelization of the world, because it is the tendency of our age to do *much* for the spread of the Gospel, but *pray comparatively little* for the divine blessing to rest on efforts made for that object. Like the Jews of old, good men in our day seem anxiously to ask, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?"—forgetting to a lamentable degree that no "*works*" are acceptable to God only so far as they are accompanied with corresponding faith and prayer. As evidence of the truth of the assertion that there is a tendency in our time to *do much* but *pray little*, witness, on the one hand, the numerous religious societies existing in Christendom, designed to promote vital christianity, such as the Sabbath School, the Tract, the Bible, the Home and Foreign Missionary, and the large amount of funds contributed annually by the church for their support. On the other hand, the usually thin attendance on the Monthly Concert, and on the weekly prayer meetings, the little fervency and interest felt and exhibited at the hour of family and secret devotions, for the blessings of the Holy Spirit to render successful the Saviour's means used for the conversion of the world. Now it would betoken the

existence of a better spirit in the church, if, while there should be no diminution in zealously "working the works of God," there should be a very large increse of more fervent and agonizing prayer for the coming of his kingdom. Such a course while it would honor God more, would, according to the divine plan, make the means used by his servants efficacious in the conversion of a greater number of souls. The united, fervent and effectual prayers of his people, in connection with other divinely recognized and appointed instrumentalities, are destined ultimately to achieve a complete and glorious triumph over sin. I would that we all might feel how little worth, in the sight of God, are our professions of interest and acts of benevolence, and our labors in the cause of missions, unless they are accompanied by appropriate and importunate supplication for the success of that cause. O that all who love God, and take delight in the spread of the Gospel among the heathen, might realize the indispensable importance of sincere and earnest prayer as the only effectual way of bringing down the blessing of the Holy Spirit on the efforts made for their conversion.

The petition, Thy Kingdom Come, addressed to Jehovah as a memorial expressive of the earnest wishes of his loyal subject on the earth, will ever be in order in the court of heaven. The Advocate, Christ Jesus, takes it all covered with tears, and presents it to Him, and intercedes for its acceptance and approval, pleading the merits of the propitiatory sacrifice he made of himself for the sins of the world. As his only begotten and dearly beloved Son, Jesus reminds the Father of the promise made in the councils of eternity, and asks for the bestowal of the heathen upon him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. The united prayer of the petitioners, congenial to the feelings of Jehovah, in accordance with his eternal purposes, will be granted, and the kingdoms of this world will speedily become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.

Christian hearer—in view of the considerations which have been urged, will you not, when you daily visit the closet, plead in greater earnest, and in the exercise of a more active faith, in behalf of a lost race, than you have ever yet done? When you bow in the social circle, and in the weekly prayer meetings of the church, will you not supplicate, with a becoming importunity, for the prevalence of God's spiritual reign among all the nations of the earth? At your evening and morning family devotions, will you not remember the heathen in their deep degradation and sinfulness, and offer a sincere and fervent petition for their rescue? In the sleepless watches of the silent night, and often while engaged in your usual pursuits, abroad or at home, will you not elevate your soul in a voiceless prayer to God, in the short, but comprehensive request, "Thy Kingdom Come?" and especially will you not regularly attend the monthly concert of prayer for the conversion of the world? How can yon better manifest your desires for the salvation of the heathen, than by uniting monthly in concerted prayer with your brethren throughout the world to Almighty God for his blessing to rest on all the means employed for their conversion? I invite you to attend the monthly Concert in the name of 800,000,000 of dying men. Consider well the unspeakable importance of such prayer, and the immense number of those for whom you should offer it. Contemplate the approaching judgment when you will be called upon by Jesus himself to give an account for your principles and your practice in relation to this duty. Let not any consideration of little moment have an unfavorable influence on your decision. Let your practice be such as an enlightened conscience will approve, and a Holy God will justify. The spiritual condition of many a deathless and priceless soul in pagan lands, may in the providence of God, be intimately connected with the reply you now make in your hearts, and the course you will hereafter pursue, in relation to this question; and will you not then regularly attend the monthly concert of prayer for the conversion of the world?

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SERMON DCXLIX.

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THE JUDGMENT OF CONSCIENCE COMPARED WITH THE JUDGMENT OF GOD.

"For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God."—1 JOHN iii. 20, 21.

GOD being perfectly just and good, it cannot be otherwise than that in any world every intelligent creature that is unconscious of guilt, may look up to Him with cheerful filial confidence. Such beings can have nothing to fear from Him. As they have deserved no evil, they have no occasion to fear any. God's judgment of them must be according to truth.

It is equally evident that moral beings who are conscious of guilt, always expect God to be displeased with them; and this apprehension of God's displeasure, is always in proportion to the correctness of their views respecting His character. The more perfectly He is known as a God of holiness, the deeper will be the impression of His abhorrence of sin, and the stronger the dread of evil from His hand, on the part of the consciously guilty.

This testimony of sinful beings against themselves, is a true and faithful testimony. It is a revelation of God's judgment concerning His accountable creatures, through the working of that moral nature which He has given them.

These principles are clearly and concisely stated in the text. "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God."

I propose that we meditate, at this time, upon *the severer condemnation which God pronounces upon those whose consciences condemn them.*

I. Such is the constitution of our moral nature, that we necessarily feel self-condemnation for sin.

II. When thus self-condemned, we have reason to expect a severer condemnation from God.

I. The first of these propositions I suppose to be evident to every person from his own experience. It has been learned by us all, in that most effectual way of learning any fact concerning our mental or moral constitution—by direct self-inspection. All the faculties of our minds become known to us by the exercise of them. Each of us knows that he has a capacity for reasoning, because he actually reasons—for choosing, because he actually chooses—for loving and hating, desiring and fearing, because he has felt those emotions in actual exercise. No description of these exercises or faculties could give a correct idea of them to one who knew nothing of them by experience, any more than we could make a blind man understand the nature of light and of colors, or give an intelligible account of the nature and laws of sound to one who has never possessed the faculty of hearing. We speak to you of these mental faculties and exercises, with the same confident expectation that you will understand us, as when we speak of the bodily senses, and the various uses and exercises of them—and for the same reason—we speak, in both cases, to your own consciousness; we describe that which exists, and exhibits its reality in your own experience. So it is in respect to that which the text presents to our consideration. We are so made that we cannot help forming opinions concerning the moral character of our own conduct, and we always experience a feeling of self-appropation or of self-condemnation, according as we have judged our conduct to be right or wrong. The faculty of our nature, whereby we are capable of these exercises, is ordinarily called CONSCIENCE! You will observe that in the text, these exercises are attributed to the *heart*, and it may be proper to remark, that generally in the Scriptures, there is no attempt at such technical precision in the use of terms as is commonly (though not always successfully) aimed at, in scientific treatises upon the same subject.

In our theological discussions, we ordinarily employ the term *heart* to denote the *affections*, but in Scripture it has a wider and more various signification. It is applied to different parts of our intellectual and moral nature, and sometimes, I think, it includes the whole of what we include in the term *mind*, in its most unrestricted sense. I suppose the fact to be, that the sacred writers did not have much reference to any scientific classification of the mental faculties, but treated of men as a rational, accountable being, and in popular phraseology, set forth to view the great facts of his moral nature and history. The language which they employed is not therefore to be understood by simply subjecting its terms and phrases to the technical definitions of modern science; but there must always be suitable regard to the connection and scope of their writing. Nor is there any great difficulty in this. When we read that "the *heart* of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil," we readily perceive that the *disposition* or *inclination* of men is the subject of discourse; and when (as in the text) our *heart* is spoken of as *condemning us*, we see as clearly, that is the faculty whereby we form judgments concerning our own moral character that is brought to view. This we are accustom-

ed to call *conscience* and we do no violence to Scripture, if we employ this word, in place of the word *heart*. The important thing is, that we recognize the great fact, which the Scripture here and elsewhere assume, that we have a capacity for thus judging ourselves, and are under a necessity of either approving or condemning our own actions. This does not need to be proved. Every one knows it to be true, as certainly as he knows that grasping a hot iron with his naked hand would give him pain. If there were any one who did not know it, it would be in vain to attempt to prove it, for he could have no conception of what was meant.

I offer, then, no proof; but simply ask you to consider this fact, which you all perfectly know, concerning yourselves. Meditate upon this high distinction which God has conferred upon you—this glorious endowment of your moral nature. By this, more than anything else, are we distinguished from the brutes beneath us. In this, more than in anything else, do we trace the lineaments of God's image upon us. The form erect, the face turned heavenward and beaming with intelligence, the noble faculty of speech, the cunning organs fitted for various and wonderful labors, the intelligence penetrating the secrets of nature, and gathering rich stores of knowledge; the energetic will subduing inferior creatures, and subjecting inanimate forces to its dominion—all these do not so ennoble man, as this capacity for moral character—this capability of doing right and wrong, of deserving praise or censure—this necessity of blaming or approving himself, and knowing himself to be worthy of blame or approbation from God.

Man has a nature which he shares with the brutes, endowed with the same faculties though generally in greater perfection. In bodily organs and senses, even in the capacity for knowledge, man is only *superior** to the brutes. But that capacity which we, have been considering, is not only superior in degree of excellence, but it is wholly different in kind from any that the brute possesses. No instruction or discipline can give the brutes ability to make moral distinctions—to know the difference between right and wrong—to feel the dignity of virtue—or to suffer the anguish of remorse. Herein it is given to man, to rise to immeasurable heights above, or sink to unfathomable depths below all other earthly creatures.

II. The text teaches us that when our consciences condemn us, we have reason to expect a severer condemnation from God.

The reasons of this may be seen :—

I. In his *infinite knowledge*. "God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things." By as much as His knowledge is greater than ours, by so much He is able more adequately to estimate the evil of our sins. It must be admitted that our views upon this subject are greatly restricted. We know that sin is an evil and bitter thing. We know that its results are exceedingly disasterous to the true interests of moral beings. We are conscious, to some degree of its debasing effect upon ourselves, and we have witnessed something of the disorder and misery which it has brought into the world. But do we estimate these things as God estimates them? Are we able to understand, as He understands, how dreadful is the enor-

* In acuteness and power of the senses, man is even *inferior* to some brutes.

mity of that which is opposed to Him and His law? Or to measure as He measures, the evil results which it has occasioned? Do we know how greatly sin has debased us? Can we tell how far above our present position is that which we should now be occupying, if we had never sinned? Or can we conceive of the beauty which would be covering the earth, and the happiness which would be blessing its inhabitants, if the race had not fallen from holiness? Doubtless in all these respects, our views are exceeding inadequate. "We see through a glass darkly." We catch slight glimpses only of the truth.

Now it is evident, that our general estimate of the evil of sin will go far to determine our particular estimate of our own guilt, in committing sin. God's judgment of our personal unworthiness will be as much more severe than our own, as He estimates more highly than we the evil and demerit of sin in general. The child knows that he ought to obey his parents, and he feels guilty and miserable when he has disobeyed them; but ordinarily his estimate of his guilt is much lower than theirs, because they have so much more just apprehension concerning the tendencies and results of disobedience; because they knew so much better than the child, what evils it will be likely to occasion, how ruinous it will be to the child, and how destructive of all the precious interests of the entire family.

The ignorant men and boys whom you may find in a jail, know that the thefts, and the quarrels, and the frauds which they have committed, are crimes, and that they deserve blame and punishment on account of them; but how much more highly is their guilt estimated by the intelligent magistrates and juries who have directed them to be shut up in prison, and by all intelligent people, who can appreciate the injury to society of such offences. What a contrast must there be between our estimate of our own guilt, and that of Him who "knoweth all things"—who sees the whole endless future as clearly as the present, and can distinctly trace all the eternal consequences of every human action.

Ah! my hearers, we do not know how excellent and glorious a being He is against whom we have sinned; how perfect a law it is that we have broken; how equitable are all its principles; how just and good all its requirements; how necessary to the true welfare of all moral beings (including ourselves) that they should be strictly enforced. Inasmuch as God can take a broader view of these great interests, and has a better appreciation of these important principles, so much more highly must He blame us for them.

2. Another reason why God estimates our guilt more highly than we, is, that He is *disinterested*. You will readily see the importance of this consideration. You know how interest sways the judgment of men. It is a righteous principle of human law, which forbids those to be judges and jurors in any cause, who have themselves a personal interest in the decision: and, although it is found impossible perfectly to carry out this principle in practice, we still insist upon it so far as it can be carried out, and we feel that just so far as we fail of securing it a complete application, so far is the administration of justice defective. Who would have trusted the family of Prof. Webster, to determine the question of his guilt or innocence? Could their minds have weighed the evidence impartially,

and firmly proceeded to a just decision? Would not their deep interest in the case certainly have swayed and perverted their judgment? And the wretched man himself, though he knew that he did the bloody deed, and could never for a moment blind himself to the hideous fact, still, did he estimate the guilt of that deed as impartial men estimate it? Was not his mouth filled with apologies, and did not his whole bearing and all his statements show that he made a strangely low estimate of his wickedness? The same thing must have been observed by all who conversed with those wretched murderers who have been executed in this place within a few years—Wyatt and Baham. Those who give religious instruction in the State prison, see the same thing. How rarely does a convict show that he has any such view of his wickedness as impartial persons have, or as he has of the wickedness of one guilty of some other crime no more heinous than his own?

This principle has an important application to the subject under discussion. We are all interested in the question of our own guilt—too deeply interested to judge correctly. The judgment of God is free from this bias. He is disinterested. His nature and His position perfectly secure Him from all such perverting influence. He does indeed love us. His love is stronger than that of any human friend. But this love exists in His mind, in perfect harmony with all His attributes. He does not love *us* in opposition to any of His other creatures, nor in disregard of the righteous principles to which His whole conduct is, and ever must be conformed. The love which He has for us can never operate in the least degree as a motive for violating one of those principles which are essential to the integrity of His character, and the steady application of which is necessary to the order and welfare of the universe. He cannot, then, from affection to us, estimate our character otherwise than in perfect accordance with truth.

We have reason to feel that our own estimate of our sinfulness is likely to be too low, God's estimate being perfectly correct is therefore fairly presumed to be far higher than ours.

3. God's *perfect holiness* is also to be taken into the account. It is not only true that His infinite knowledge makes Him so much more capable than we of appreciating the immense evil of sin, and that His nature and position perfectly secure Him from all bias of interest in the case; but, from His perfect holiness, He has an *aversion* to sin, of which we probably have no adequate conception. It is not simply a correct intellectual apprehension of the evil of sin—a right judgment of the mind concerning it, in which holiness consists. There is included a repugnance to it, a dislike and aversion, whereby it is repelled from the soul. Now I suppose that we cannot adequately conceive the utter abhorrence with which God regards sin. The crimson blush of purest modesty, at the most revolting obscenity—the shivering horror of the most sensitive pity, at the most barbarous cruelty—the shrinking dread of the sincerest piety, at the most hideous blasphemy—do but faintly resemble, do most inadequately illustrate God's aversion to sin. With the whole of His infinite capacity He loathes and abhors it.

Now, when we consider how the practice of sin blunts the moral sensibility: how, when the mind repeatedly consents to wrong, the conscience gradually loses its sensitiveness, we must perceive that creatures who have

sinned so much as we, cannot possess that delicate moral sensibility which is essential to a right estimate of their own sinfulness.

Sin has perverted our conscience. Noble as this faculty of our nature still is, it has lost much of its original excellence. Solemn, and earnest, and faithful as are its warnings, surely as they would turn us from all sin if we would completely obey them, they do not furnish a full measure of the evil against which they are directed. If we are ever truly reformed from the wickedness of our hearts—if, by the grace of God, any of us are experiencing sanctification, our consciences will continually grow more tender and sensitive, till at length they will shrink with unspeakable aversion from the slightest taint of moral pollution, and dread the smallest sin more than we now dread perdition. Alas, how far away from this blessed state are we all at present? So far are we also from even the ability to understand the strength of God's aversion to the sins which we are daily committing.

REMARKS.

1. The suitable consideration of this subject furnishes an explanation of a phenomenon which to some may have seemed unintelligible—*conviction of sin.* The anguish of sin which is sometimes experienced by persons, in view of their sinfulness, is regarded by some as absurd and irrational, the result of a religious delusion. And yet this has been experienced by some of the most intelligent and sober persons in any community; has been followed by a most decided and favorable change in their character, and is regarded by themselves as having a most important connection with that change. How was it that these persons came to have such views of their own character? Is it a fanatical delusion that has taken possession of such minds, and has produced such beneficial results? Is it common for insane delusions to produce such effects? Is it not far more likely that they are correct in the opinion that it is the simple and natural result of being made to see their true character, of being delivered from the illusions which before had blinded them? And are they not right in thinking that there is little hope of your applying to the Saviour for the forgiveness of your sins, until God shall open your eyes to similar views of your character?

2. The subject furnishes a strong motive for applying humbly to Christ for salvation.

We all have more or less conviction of sin. That is, we are convinced that we are sinners, and that sin is what God, in His holiness, must forever abhor. We see that His disapprobation of us as sinners, must be much stronger than our own, and that it is likely to be unspeakably stronger. How, then, should we view that provision for our pardon which He has made, and which He has declared to be necessary in order that we might be pardoned? Shall we take it upon us to decide what was requisite as an atonement for sins, the guilt of which we are so incapable of estimating? And when God has told us so solemnly that nothing can wash that guilt away but the blood of His Son, shall we call this in question, and stay to speculate upon the philosophy of the matter, and try expedients of our own devising? May God deliver us from such folly, and, making us feel how guilty and how helpless we are, dispose us

all to "fly for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us," the hope of forgiveness through the atoning blood of Christ.

3. Light is thrown from this subject upon a solemn passage in Scripture: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Who can estimate how fearful a thing it is? The punishment which He will inflict upon those who do not seek and obtain forgiveness, will be the expression of His estimate of their guilt—a full and adequate expression of it. It will be His exhibition of the value He sets upon the interest of His kingdom, against which they have warred, and the honors of His throne, which they have so daringly outraged. Who can stand against such a manifestation? Who dares encounter it? If we could but know the extent of the evil, if it were one, the depth and magnitude of which we could measure, and, drawing the lines of our accurate conception about it, could say, "*This is the whole*," it would then be far less terrific than it is. But, ah! we cannot thus survey it. It is immeasurable. All language is exhausted in describing it; all metaphors are too feeble to represent it. Like the Spirit which passed before Eliphaz in his vision, "It stands still, but we cannot discern the form thereof," and well may the contemplation of it have the same effect upon us, "making all our bones to shake, and the air of our flesh to stand up." Herein especially is the fearfulness of perdition, that we know not, and cannot know, how fearful it is. It is the plunging into an abyss whose depths is unfathomable. It is the dashing away from the fair regions of light and joy into darkness that forever deepens. Oh, let us not run the fearful hazard. Let us grasp the hand which is so kindly extended—let us eagerly seize the mighty arm that can bear us away to the abode of safety. Let us be forever indebted to the grace of Him who thus plucks us from the jaws of perdition.

HYMN.

AWAKED by Sinai's awful sound.
My soul in guilt and thrall I found,
And know not where to go.
O'erwhelmed in sin, with anguish slain,
"The sinner must be born again,"
Or sink in endless woe.

Amazed I stood, but could not tell
Which way to shun the gates of hell.
For death and hell drew near;
I strove, indeed, but strove in vain;
"The sinner must be born again"
Still sounded in my ear.

When to the law I trembling fled,
It poured its curses on my head;
I no relief could find.
This fearful truth increased my pain;
"The sinner must be born again"
O'erwhelmed my tortured mind.

Again did Sinai's thunder roll,
And guilt lay heavy on my soul,
A vast unwieldy load.
Alas! I read, and saw it plain,
"The sinner must be born again,"
Or drink the wrath of God.

The saints I heard with rapture tell
How Jesus conquered death and hell
And broke the fowler's snare;
Yet, when I found the truth remain,
"The sinner must be born again,"
I sank in deep despair.

But while I thus in anguish lay,
Jesus of Nazareth passed that way,
And felt His pity move.
The sinner, by His justice slain,
Now by His grace is born again,
And sings redeeming love.

To heaven the joyful tidings flew;
The angels tuned their harps anew,
And loftier notes did raise:
"All hail the lamb that once was slain
Unnumbered millions, born again,
Shall sing thine endless praise."

OCCUM.

SERMON DCL.

BY REV. ROBERT M'GONEGAL.
PROVINCETOWN, MASS.

THE SPIRITUAL CULTURE OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY.*

"The Lord shall count when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there."—Ps. lxxxvii. 6.

The scenographic locality understood in the text is the city of the glorified state—the Heavenly Jerusalem—wherein the ransomed children of God shall be finally assembled together, to be registered among its holy inhabitants. The places whence they shall be gathered, as distinctly taught throughout the entire psalm, are all parts of the globe ever to be inhabited by the family of man. The specific condition, which decides the question of elligibility to a place among the population of the city of God, is birth in Zion—held, by universal consent, to be the militant church of Christ in the present world. Thus we possess one of the great and cheering truths of the divine Word—the citizens of that realm of beatitudes are to come from among all the races of the earth, for it is written, "the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it."

Citizenship in a militant church is not a simple idea, but is complex—embracing all that culture, or discipline, or training, which make the true and robust Christian character. For the term city supposes the existence of an organized government; also the reciprocal relation of government and subject. It further comprises the operation of all those educational institutions and auspices, by whose influences Christians are reared up, from the earliest age to the ripest manhood. The chief principle, however, which blazes forth with the brightest flame is, that the Sovereign authority, or ruling power, of both the earthly and the heavenly church, is identical. There is also a transfer of citizens from one branch of the spiritual church of God to the other. Hence the phrase, "the Lord shall count when He writeth up the people," shows the ground on which a name is entered in the registers of that celestial city, that it be found in the genealogical records of the people of God—the Zion of this probationary world.

There is here a truthful correspondence between the teachings of a genuine philosophy and the word of God, that the high culture more than implied in citizenship among the people of God on earth, is an indispensable prerequisite preparation for a place among His people of a glorified state. But the lowest condition on which God recognizes any man to be of the seed of Abraham, in this state of being is, that he experiences spiritual regeneration. The conclusion follows with the resistless force of moral demonstration, that He can be satisfied with nothing less than this,

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in a standard of antecedent preparation for the society of saints made perfect, in a higher and holier state. Yet, by a careful perusal of the Christian system, taught in the New Testament, we learn of provisions made on a scale of the grandest benovolence, to educate and prepare the most magnificent and perfect samples, or patterns, of man made holy, for the saintship of the New Jerusalem. This world is, therefore, the appointed arena whereon the "School of Christ" is to achieve its victories over both flesh and spirit, in their entire subjugation to the dominion of grace—whereon the war of faith, and hope, and love is to be waged, for the full unfolding of a character "perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord."

But principles should be exemplified in the concrete—not held alone in the abstract. We, therefore, hold that all churches holding the great practical truths of New Testament evangelism, are responsible to God and the age for the light which they may cause to shine. This is emphatically a teaching age; but the Church of God should specially teach from the lively oracles committed to her. Nor ought she to train the thousands who daily come to her gates to seek the blessed shade of her institutions, for life, and its multiplied forms of business reponsibility—nor for a high intellectual standing—nor for places of conflict with the scientific infidelity of the times—nor chiefly for a position in the visible church—but rather for the ranks of the triumphant church, the city of angels and of *God*. Teach our children and youth the experimental marrow of the gospel. What is best for heaven is best for the visible church—and whatever prepares for the earthly house of God is qualifying in the highest style of preparation for the state above. Qualifications for the heavenly world, for the Christian church, and for the great American Republic, may and should be blended in the same nobly finished character. Such we believe to be the men wanted by the times—such in divine learning—such in experience—such in moral beauty and strength —such in scriptural wisdom.

Fully persuaded of the truthfulness and safety of our position—of its not being without precedent—of its meeting with favor among the true evangelical Israel of God, both in this and in other countries, with the greatest hope that good may be the result of our deliberations, we proceed to our theme for the present interesting occasion.

The *spiritual culture* of the *Christian system* to be taught in the Sabbath schools of *evangelical Christianity*.

I. *Evangelical Christianity teaches the regeneration of human nature.*

This is the beginning of the new spiritual life, therefore a matter of understanding to the pupils of Christianity. It is fundamental to her identity. We regard this great work as the commencement of a new relationship with the Divine Being, termed heirship with Christ. The most ingenious and penetrating of mankind could never have invented a thought of so great magnitude, and filled with so many wonders of condescension and grace. In the word of God, it is designated as a *second birth, a birth from above, a Divine resurrection, Christ formed in the heart, partaking of the Divine nature.*

When regarded strictly, its position forbids that we pronounce it a process of cultivation. Yet it is both an antecedent and a condition;

going before any positive steps of training, and being a relation of new creation, it is a condition on which depends all that can afterwards follow. We may count this spiritual change a part of the edifice, on account of its similitude to the foundation of a building, on whose firm and supernatural basis or structure the superfabric may afterwards be reared.

We regard this doctrine of the birth from above as the fundamental one of the venerable Christian system; it therefore justly enters most deeply into the spirit, the experience, the beliefs, and the activities of the most retired and private life of religion. Our ways of spiritual life, our modes of thought, our varieties in feeling and sentiment, our mental and spiritual habits from hence take their direction and their coloring. In this regard, a new-born soul truly hath a new secret life, of which no other one can form the most distant conception, for he sees things, and hears things, and feels things, and enjoys things, by faith, to which others are strangers. His private life, like that of other men, lies where no eye but the omniscient one rests upon him, but here the parallel ends, for he alone of all men walks and communes with God. In social life, amidst a thousand varied influences, and characters, and personages, the history of divine children, of divinely regenerated humanity, is essentially the same, possesses a remarkable identity in the style of its associations, and in the quality of its companionships. Equally true is it, and for kindred reasons and on similar grounds, that the more manifest and public life of a Christian is not identical, with that of other men. The radical origin of a holy life is so opposite, and the principles so dissimilar, and the ends of temporal being so great a contrast to the life, and principles, and ends of life of an unholy one, that the currents of existance may flow indefinitely near and parallel to each other, but they will never commingle their waters nor become one. The reason is evident; the present being, with the one, proceeds according to the *law of life*, while with the other, it is ruled according to a changeless *law of death*.

Precisely at this point, evangelical Christianity should be wisely guarded. This cannot be done till her nurseries of instruction are conducted on the true principles, and in her own spirit. These must be operated on the axiomatic truth that, every institution, every character among men and the practical life of man, cannot have too much of the moving hand of God in them. A basis of instruction is wanted, wherein the hand of ignorance, of instability, of corruption, of guilt, and of superlative weakness, is little known, except as an agency of conveyance, and wherein the power, which is all-moving, and grace, which is all-conquering, may reveal their quenchless energies. The human mind, before it has learnt to be sceptical, or become the prey of doubt or theorizing, is eminently recumbent. It revels in the greatest satisfaction when it finds an earnestly sought pillar, against whose mighty form it may lean, amid the tremulous vibrations of human opinion, and the commotions of a conjectural faith. Regeneration is such a pillar. The eternal God has reared it, and on its majestic proportions He has written His name. Though unknown to human philosophy—though unseen by the wise ones of the world—though a stranger to the ethics of mere intellect—though eschewed in the pantheistic philosophy of modern times, still it is the vitallaw of spiritual life—it is the dignity of man—it is the wisdom of God.

We recognise in this principle what, in the appliances of human governments, is termed naturalization. Its positions and relations to the various parts of the Divine economy, are in all essential particulars analogous. It is that process which ends in an alien becoming invested with the rights and privileges of a native citizen. It, is therefore, both an act of favor and of ability on the part of a beneficent government, and a work of relationship done for and in the nature of the alien. The Majesty of Heaven, by every possible right which can adhere in the Creator, the Preserver, and the Benefactor, superadded to all which attaches to the merciful Saviour of fallen man, prescribes what conditions shall be met, and what work of naturalization shall be wrought prior to an alien being made a subject and a citizen of grace. A change of nature in which the individual becomes both a passive recipient and an active agent, in this work, by virtue of which a child of darkness becomes a child of light—one of death is transformed into one of life. Every scion of our degenerate humanity is a partaker of the degeneracy of the parent stock. Anterior to the change under contemplation, than which there is none greater or more important in the history of man's being, every child, of all and even the best of parents, baptized or unbaptized, is a foreigner—is subject to the powers of another realm—is in heart an enemy to the rule of Christ, till he makes the ultimate election, and is made a subject of God by the spiritualizing agency of the Holy Ghost. This is our reply, should the question be proposed, why we would teach this great doctrine to the young of our Sabbath schools, because God has taught it to us, and what the Great Parent of all has made known as of the highest importance to us, is doubtless of the greatest moment to those who bear our name, and blood, and infirmities, and examples with them through the world.

This basis of Christian culture being understood as such, the obligation to teach it to our children is as imperative as the dangers to their faith on this vital point are imminent. Besides this, should it not be so taught, we have no substitute but that terrible philosophy, which makes Christ a better sort of man—regeneration a calling out the latent good of human nature—Christianity a very high and valuable philosophy—the atonement the death of a noble man for his noble principles—and which transmutes the genial piety of the gospel into cold morality. What we here teach is fundamental to the most liberal state of spiritual education. Adapted to the masses in their lowest grovellings in vice, and fitted to the wants of the higher grades of society, it meets with an equally nice adjustment the lowly mind and the highly cultured taste. It provides the reformatory power so urgently sought. It supplies the element of stability so imperatively demanded by the times. To be all this to the present age, it proposes to make each man strong in himself. The individuals are born of a strong God, therefore the aggregated strength of the Christian church. The oak is firm because his every fibre is strong. We wonder at that mighty influence, which enchains the orbs of universal nature in the magnificent whole, and each part in its own system, but still more are we astonished to perceive the bonds of an all-pervading and an all-uniting force extending its attractive power into the minutest particle of sand in the stupendous frame. Not all the universe of God—not its individual systems—not each particular orb alone, but the smallest grain

on the ocean's margin has attraction in itself. So is it in the spiritual creation of the All Wise. There could be no euphonizing cord in the endless systems of His empire of being, were it not that each live soul had been lighted and warmed by the individualizing finger of the Almighty. There cannot be one of the glorified church and of the militant church, but on the same grand scale of citizenship—each integer changed and incorporated.

It is further evident that there is really no safety to the Christian system, with the standard of admission to citizenship less elevated than an entire change of the spiritual nature. No trust could be placed in the hands of the subject of an inimical sovereign. Transfer of allegiance is the absolute condition of a place among Jehovah's subjects. Could it be, our temporal governments would require all this as the price of a free man's rights and privileges. But Godproposes to accomplish this superhuman work for man, provided he will co-operate in it. He, therefore, requires no qualification for citizenship in His divine empire, which he is not able to bestow; no nature regenerate, which He has not promised to beget; no light which He is unwilling to cause to flame; no life in these cold clods of death, which He does not intend to call forth from their tomb; no love, which he does not pledge to inspire and sustain. Should this feature of evangelism be suffered to drop from our systems of training, her enemies would hold a jubilee, her polished shafts of beauty would fall from their temple-place, her peerless heritage would be given to reproach, for the rising hosts of her children would come up with an essentially defective faith, with an insufficient Christian experience, with a piety bereft of its richest fruition here, and its brightest felicities hereafter.

II. *Evangelical Christianity teaches the spiritual discipline appropriate to the highest style of culture.*

The term discipline embraces a complex idea, and is used in the sense of education, correction, affliction and trial combined in one whole. This idea can be put in part illustrated by the course of training applied to the pupil, in a thoroughly organized and well operated school of the best class. Here the theory of the scholastic life is taught, together with many of those habits which pertain to the mature manhood, but the instructor never crosses the threshold of the academic hall into the active and responsible affairs of life. Not so with the discipline of Christianity. Theory and practice, teacher and pupil, are never parted from the society of each other.

Therefore the primary result to the scholar in the schools of evangelism is a large fund of available religious knowledge. At first, he is the recipient of a vast variety of facts, and principles, and pleasures, all of which are inseparably interwoven with the duties, the relations, the obligations and the characters with which we come into daily contact. By the increase of knowledge supposed, the student is prepared to proceed on in the acquisition of very many different departments of varied learning, because, his acquiring abilities have arrived at the strength and maturity equal to the labor of pioneering amid the infinite regions of truth, tracked by now and then a solitary and ardent traveller, but never alone and unguided. The great world, or universe of spiritual truth, lies open

to the footstep of every one who will laboriously search for treasures, inviting in the most eloquent terms to the possession of its infinitudes of wealth —nature, providence, and the revealed word of God, external to us, and a world of mind and spirit within us, making a rich source of experimental gains of knowledge. Hence the learner becomes furnished with whatever is necessary for a largely beautiful culture of spiritual nature. This department of discipline therefore comprehends the imparting of knowledge and its objective result, the development of the abilities.

Discipline is a work of extermination. There are elements in our nature, agitating the very fountains of being, which discipline must crucify. Errors in judgment, in faith, in experience, and in action, must disappear, that rectitude of the inward and outward man may take their place. It is intended to extinguish the turbulent tempers of the soul, those great disturbers of tranquillity and enemies to gracious order, and *to rear up* in their stead the most serene and magnanimous dispositions and peaceful impulses. It corrects the grovelling and sinking tendencies of our nature and places therein those benignant incentives to goodness, which put forth their entire forces heavenward. It must pierce and slay the appetites and passions of both body and spirit together, which stand eagerly looking out of every aperture, and door, and gateway of the goodly human body, ready to invite and welcome old enemies into the heritage of God. A great work of extermination must thus be achieved ere the soul can be left in peaceful enjoyment of her legacies of grace, and this must be largely done by discipline.

A further design of discipline is, to accomplish a work of submission in the affections and will. The divine rule respecting our management of the affections—and the same is true of the will—is, "Set not your affections on things on the earth." But the truant tendency of the human heart is ever towards things in this world. Therefore the hand of discipline removes the objects of affection by dissolutions—possessions fly away in a day—health and vigor waste by unanticipated diseases—position and employment are lost without fault or just cause—favor among men fluctuates and is lost without demerit or incapacity. The pompousness of pride or self-estimation, or vanity, so natural to humanity unregenerated, must be humbled by the hand of severe afflictive visitations. The will of man has ever striven most earnestly to declare independence for itself, to elect its own way against the truth and law of God, to worship the idols of its own handicraft, to reverence the decisions of its own understanding, and to limit every other being and thing to its own narrow plan of operations. Therefore, the pall of obstruction, disruption, or disappointment, is, by a wise unseen hand, spread over the field of purposes, or the lawns of anticipated bliss; over the circle of domestic fondness, or the area of professional duties and avocations; and the clear, bright visions of auroral glory are shrouded in a portentous meridian hour of storm and tempest, when the will, chastened by the finger of Providence, chooses the will and way of God, and, joined with grace-endowed and elevated effections, makes common cause with every noble impulse of heavenly-mindedness, and adds momentum to every movement towards the city of God.

Still further. Discipline has not achieved its entire work, till it has forced out into robust development the beautiful proportions of a manly

Christian character. Trials are necessary to the perfection of boldness and skill. Temptations resisted establish on a firm basis the manly purpose and the high resolve. Struggles and contests, long maintained, nourish faith, and hope, and are prophetic of final triumph. The Christianity of our times wants and produces strong and finely unfolded manhood. The man trained in the exposures and hardships of the sea, or in the toil of the furrowed plain, or in the sweat of the mown meadow, or amid the settler's tree-felling, or over the ringing anvil, or in the cot of the swamp delver, is one for a model form of the outer stature. So does evangelism bring forth the spiritual model man of the heart. For trials, and struggles, and toils, and temptations bring out beauty and strength. No true Christian man, though he may faint and stagger many a time beneath their blows, should utterly fall and be destroyed. Heaven has no sons spoiled by indulgence or easy affluence. Peter the Great was not made into the character of princely greatness by the luxuries of palaces, or by the idleness of position, but by the travels of Europe, and the refinements of intelligent observation. God's true men is like His own oak, standing out in the open plain. Unsupported by its kindred, it has grown up in unison with surrounding fortunes of exposure. It has spread abroad strong and thrifty branches for more light. Its roots, like mighty prongs of strength shoot forth below the turf which covers them, into an ample area, to support the fury of the elements. The torrents and winds of the firmament may test their utmost strength, but they cannot uproot or prostrate the vegetable giant. It has been trained by its exposed fortunes for its place and stature. Such is man disciplined after the similitude of that wonderful Being, who "had not where to lay His head." And such are some of the sentiments to be taught to the rising thousands of evangelical Christianity. Thus our youth become familiar with some of the operating cases of true greatness as they are applied in the economy of God.

III. *Evangelical Christianity embraces and applies the law of labor.*

This law equally relates and applies to each department of our threefold being. The entire history of the race of man justifies,—the works of man prove him capable of, such application of it. In no period, in no relations, in no circumstances can he be exempt from the binding force of this law; not though he may choose to incur the consequences of disobedience, rather than reap the rich fruits of obedience, which as a moral agent, liberty of action allows him to do. Temporal being and labour, therefore, ever parallel each other, in the history of moral beings on earth. Even in the paradisiacal state, government over animal existence, and care of the soil and its rich fruitage, were in the requirements which God made at the hands of the new created.

Nor is it necessary to go far to find the primary reason for this beneficent provision. In the tender flesh of the childhood body, or in the secret chambers, where lie undeveloped the mighty powers of the young mind, or in the slumbering capabilities of the spiritual nature, the law of labor has for its chief aim the unfolding of strength. Contact between these mutually related agencies, this law and the complex nature of man, is designed and endevoured of God, who best knows with what he has endowed His magnificent creation of spiritual beings, and what will most fully draw

them forth into strong, active, and mature existence. Where have been the noblest specimens of manhood, is no difficult question to the scholar of history. They have ever been produced, where the reluctant soil is compelled by the tireless hand of human industry, to yield its fruitfulness, and rarely where the ready earth with bounteous spontaneity has poured forth her fullest treasures of fruitage in repay for the scantiest tillage.

We still urge another thought on the effect of this law on man as an agent. Strength, which is a priceless element of qualification in the human character and abilities, is first the result of original endowment of the Creator. This fact should have its full weight, thus early in our discussion. Some have great natural vigor in all respects, while others have less strength. Yet all accountable beings have some endowment of strength. Therefore it becomes a point of earliest attention in teaching the young, to show them what they may become, as well as what they are, by the munificent gifts of the Creator's hand. This sentiment is to its utmost extent true when applied to man's spiritual nature, and should be made the matter of Sabbath school instruction. The achievements of genius, whatever they have done for the world otherwise, are unknown in the spiritual economy of God. The Christian system lays hold of the law of labor and the capabilities of our being and brings them together—the former for the work of development, the latter for the work of external performance, to which they are so nicely adapted. To do most for God and man, in glorifying the former by using every talent in His service, and in doing good to the latter, by laboring for the soul and body, as opportunity may occur, is to be truly great and good.

This law of industrial occupation of our powers makes no distinctions among classes of men, unless it may lay its heaviest and most irksome labors on the most gifted. The sublime teaching of the Gospel show men to be responsible according to what has been committed. Human society therefore is levelled into a vast compact of labor. None can labor beyond his ability, and none is permitted to labor less. According to the Christian rule of employment, cunning, or artifice, or ignorance, or idleness, can avail nothing to any one, without exception. New England men, of all men in the world, should be able to understand this law, and should not only know the value of its application, but appreciate its results to the laborer himself, and to spiritual society, whose prosperity is wholly the consequences of its successful operation. Nor should they be slow to teach, both in the domestic circle and in the Sunday-school, the *fulness* of this law, as the entire subsequent history for both states of being of each pupil, depends on it. He should be taught to covet the field where the laurels of labor can be won—to seek the largest arena of usefulness—for American youth are the inheritance of the world. This is the true vineyard of God, where the laborer earns his reward at the night-fall of life. A crown of peerless gems is held out to lure him into the scene of industrial activity. A race of illustrious issues is here set before him, with other than Olympian favors at the goal. Richer than Castilian fountains spring forth before the throne of God.

If high example is anything—if the noblest characters of all time are of weight in any cause, then is the labor of the Christian system made honorable. Monopoly is here unknown. Exclusiveness in classes is here unknown. From its venerable Founder, laboring for human weal in the

streets of Jerusalem, to the lowliest disciple of one talent, the rule of heavenly reckoning admits of no exempt cases. Aristocratic and privileged classes, living on inheritive honors and emoluments, passing probation in sumptuous idleness, or in indolent independence of laborious activity, are total strangers to Christianity. Not that labor commends us meritoriously to the Supreme of heaven, but the despicable shiftless and driveller, God does not harbor, and kindred habits the Saviour of the martyrs would suppress. From the fishermen to the reformers, dignity and glory are cast into this scale.

Nor should the scholars of Christianity mistake as to the kind of labor demanded; it is wholly spiritual. All vocations but the Christian look primarily to the material avails, which come back like profits on an investment of funds. No materialist notions enter here as a lure from the walks of worldliness. Pure spiritual labor and spiritual rewards stand on the threshold of this temple of holy wonders, so that every Magus may be chilled and fall out of the divine machinery for the world's conversion as early in his career as possible. Temporal awards may or may not follow in the illustrious train of divinely appointed sequents. It is not, therefore, positively certain that the dignity of true labor will ever, in the present state, be vindicated entirely to the satisfaction of the worldly man, or to the perception of a temporizing church. Such spiritualism knows no compromise—no coming down from its place of abode with its unapproachable *Author*. Men must come up to it for such labor is mostly in an invisable interior world of spirit-being and the tokens of its achievements, and the proofs of its success are mostly addressed to the spirit vision, made clear by spiritual faith in Christ.

But the visible evidence of this labor going on the demonstration of its success is truly multiform. To Him who has truly read the history of the world, monumental trophies are not wanting in number or in grandeur. The labor-rewards to the entire system of evangelism are scattered along the Anglo-American history, from that chill December day when the venerable Pilgrim band prayed, and sang, and labored on the "wild New England shore," down to that late signal triumph of the higher law before the bar of the great American people. She needs no grand old blind bard, who sang of his heroes fighting, and falling, or triumphing on the plain of Troy. No want of the lay of the greatest Roman poet, to sing of the rearing up of a mighty empire in Latium from a fugitive remnant, caught away from the conflagrant ruins of a sacked emporium of temporal power. Monuments more lasting than the classic—remains more glorious than of triumphal arches, or pencilled canvas—trophies more illustrious than of grandeur or of republican magnificence—publish the achievements of evangelism. Do the learned world grow enthusiastic over the classical pages of antiquity? Do antiquarian bigots wax warm over a few broken remnants of old Babylon, or Thebes, or Athens? The classics of Christianity claim scores of ages of earlier events, and personages, and times, but still she survives by the eternal years of God being hers, and flourishes in youth and beauty by a ceaseless succession of renewals. As the youth of ancient times was taught to look on the contests of men and horses on the course, to study the pages of heroism and renown, to fire him with a love of martial achievements and glory, so should the children of Christendom be taught the sublime morality of the New and Old Testament, the

heroism, which has achieved so much, not for a stinted dominion, but for the world, the toil which has built up, not an empire of twelve hundred years, but one for all time, the love of glory which looks, not to temporal fame but toward the accomplishing of the great, the good, the beautiful, for the world, but the church of God, and for the immortality held forth in the Scriptures, which claims eternal duration as its own.

IV. *Evangelical Christianity is distinguished for its aggressiveness.*

This great and truly wonderful system has been long enough in the world to have fully shown itself, and to prove to the world, in part at least, what it could have done for mankind, had they given an uncounteracted dominion to it. But it has been obliged to contend its way, by moral means alone, against the most secret, subtle and malicious agencies. A system, framed by the wisest combination of intelligent forces, could not have stood a moment amid this mighty array of wickedness and power. It began in those earlier days, opening its effective batteries of truth on the world, making the most rapid and amazing advances, as if the hand of an all-wise and Almighty Being were guiding and impelling it.

It has all the attributes appropriate to a self-maintaining instrumentality. All the elemental components of eternal truth are here combined to one great end—the glory of God in the conquest of the world. It is a living vitalizing energy. Conventional accessories, when brought up to carry it out as its obedient servants are employed and aided, but when they would sustain it, or add to its divine vitality, they are set aside as useless. Christianity creates its own momentum. To its wise utterances, the united experience and wisdim of senates add no additional authority. Its decisions have no more weight when reiterated by the supreme benches of justice throughout the enlightened world, than before such attention. As human inventions have added nothing to it, scepticism and infidelity have taken nothing from it. Stable as the throne from which it emanated, the convulsions of historic periods do not change it, nor does the passing sway of empires retard its eternal progress.

At the feet of its great Author we must also lay down our admiration of its permeativeness. This ability of the gospel scheme to diffuse itself has ever been an astonishment to its foes, and a source of admiration to its votaries. The capability here noted is most happily presented in the figure of the female hand diffusing the leavening element throughout the meal of the three measures. The transmuting agent, by a constant agitation, carries the change from particle to particle, till the entire atomic structure has undergone the endeavored renewal. Inseperable from its permeating power is that of assimilation. The truth of the Gospel reproduces itself with a living presence in the soul of the recipient. Appetences unknown before have received an existence—affinities both new and beautiful are born—relations not before supposed possible to fallible and impotent man, spring up like new streams in a thirsty land, and surprise the child of God with their cheering influence.

The true heroic belong to the culture of this evangelizing agency. That is, this character seems to be begotten in the nature of her sons. Christianity is able to overcome the sluggishness, so natural to man, and to lift him up into new visions of the world, for which he is to live, and impel him to even great, spiritual, and noble deeds. Being a mighty, all-

pervading and overruling agency, it imparts to him a life, and an enterprising of great things, which man nowhere else, even under the most favorable auspices, ever enjoys or performs. The spirit of man, so timid, so fearful, so frail in a contest with passions and unseen enemies, is by its magic touch transformed into the true, the bold, and the warlike. Thirst of blood, of conquest, so long united together on the same field with cupidity and prodigality, are unknown to the Christian soldier. The Gospel does not intend man for a low and ignoble being, therefore inspires him with a love for true glory, which has for its aim the rescue of mankind from thraldom, and for its awarder, the Being who created it. True glory is consonant with fighting, but there are no plains spread with victims rolled in blood—with conquest, but no hand of repine is stretched out—with power which never ends in tyranny and oppression—with captivity, whose subjects never bear the lash or the bonds of slavery—with position, which never comes by intrigue or violence—with fame, whose note is never counter-cried with the execrations of widowhood, and recorded in the tears of orphanage. This short breath of a life is ended in glory or disgrace, according to the result of which our being here is a blessing or a curse.

> "Say, why was man so eminently raised
> Amid the vast creation,—why ordained
> Through life and death to dart his piercing eye,
> With thoughts beyond the limits of his frame;—
> But that the Omnipotent might send him forth,
> In sight of mortal and immortal powers.
> As on a boundless theatre, to run
> The great career of justice—to exalt
> His generous aim to all diviner deeds—
> To chase each partial purpose from his breast,
> And through the midst of passion and of sense,
> And through the tossing tide of chance and pain,
> To hold his course unfaltering, while the voice
> Of truth and virtue, up the steep ascent
> Of nature, calls him to his high reward—
> The applauding smile of Heaven."

Nor should the scholar of evangelism be taught these and kindred sentiments without learning that his own character and being are first of all to be the inviting theatre of this holy welfare. Himself becomes first the captive—wears the chains of sacred bondage, of which he ever after glories, and from which it is his high purpose *never* to be free. This is the grand characteristic of every unit of mind and soul, in the mighty mass of soldierly ability, which Christianity is culturing and incorporating into a standing force of aggressiveness, whose legions are to be disbanded only when their life-campaign is closed forever. First, he is an integer of rebellion; against him the Gospel aims its vast forces of truth; in his behalf are enlisted the sympathies of heaven and redeemed men. Then he becomes a trophy of victory— fruitage unto life by the travail of Jesus' all-capacious heart of love. Lastly, he becomes an integer of co-operative hostility against the powers of night, for the safety of man and the glory of God. To him the evangelism of the New Testament is committed, and his life's tenure is the period of his commission.

But let it be remembered, that Christianity does not employ the artifices, the cunning, the authority, or the power of man as man, neither in

his civil nor in his social relations and abilities. She despises the quibbles of diplomacy and the intrigues of cabinets and courts. Her power stands above the aid which comes from navies on the sea and from armies on the land. Her prosperity is not dependent on the exchequers of Christendom; for the infinite treasures of the globe, or the universe, are the Lord's, and, at the command of her great Author, the volcanoes of the world would become so many mints, from which might flow perpetual golden streams. The statesmen and orators of the great nations, with all their learning, power, and eloquence, are of no avail till they cast away the expendiency of politics, and the temporizing wisdom of the world, and learn a new language, whose idioms of thought, and forms of emotional speech, and fire of pathos are new to the earth, and whose great truths are the salvation of all who hear and obey.

Let others turn this way for reformatory means, while others turn another way for the same. But they will not find what they want, what the world of expectant manhood wants, till they turn their face to the Gospel. From hence shall arise that kingdom which is to fill the earth. The rolling stone, hewn from the mountain without hands, whose path of travel lay over the earth, is now on its way. While princes are at war—while senates are in commotion—while cabinets are debating—while fanaticism is leaping beyond what is written—while despotism is nodding to its fall—while scepticism is asking, Where are the signs?—this evangelism has taken the wings of the morning and on the impetus which itself has created, is going through the world. The east not alone, but also the west is sending Magi up to Jerusalem, to ask, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews."

Such are a few of the sentiments with whose abiding presence and influence we would have the youth of Christendom attended as they go forth. Fortified internally with the noblest views, and with the richest practical experience of its amazing truths, and externally with all those forensic abilities and the armour necessary to the field of conflict, may character beautifully cultured into strength, and ability brought forth into perfect development, be found equal to every exigency, and firm amid the changes and scepticism of the times. Withhold not from the sons of the nineteenth century a knowledge of the rich legacies which they inherit of liberty and material prosperity, and character, and intelligence, and position among the great nations of the earth, nor the responsibilities and labors also which they incur and must bear for the maintenance of these inheritances. They live for posterity of late ages of temporal history, for the welfare of the world, and must be trained for such a life of the great and the momentous. Let them therefore be taught that treasures, more than the golden mountains of the Pacific, beckon the Anglo-American onward to an empire of science, and true spiritualism, and law, and liberty in the great West—that they hold reversions of prosperity for the world, of all themselves have received from their heritage of greatness and glory—that they are to be, what the mighty, the brave, and the holy have been before them, benefactors to the great future. Hence would we send them from the threshold of the present freighted with the richest argosies of truth and faith, and quenchless love to God and man, baptized into the spirit and frame of the martyrs, cherished by the cheering experiences of evangelism—amply qualified to teach generations yet to be, for being taught by Him "who spake as never man spake."

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SERMON DCLI.

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THE LEAVEN OF THE KINGDOM.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened."—MATT. xiii. 33.

This parable contains the statement of a great principle or law, which exists and operates both in the kingdom of nature and of grace. It is the law of silent, unconscious growth, development, and assimilation. This law has many wonderful illustrations in the *natural* world. The growth of the vegetable kingdom—what is it but a standing miracle of the power of God! An acorn is dropt into the earth. That acorn, little as it is, contains the germ of a mighty growth. It dies; but from its mouldering ashes there shoots forth a thing of life, which, without hands, and without any visible means or agencies, grows to a trunk of great size and height, and flings out its brawny arms towards heaven, and strikes deep its roots in the earth, and stands forth in the pride and greatness of its strength to attest for ages and centuries the power of that hidden life which the acorn contains. So also a man sows "a grain of mustard-seed, which is indeed the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." The instance cited in the text is no less remarkable. A handful of "leaven" is hid in three measures of meal, and the woman goeth about her business. That leaven contains a latent principle or power, which is sure to work a great change in that mass of

meal which conceals it. Quickly the process of fermentation begins; the parts nearest to the leaven are first affected; the work of agitation goes on silently but rapidly; the mass begins to expand and rise; the living spirit extends its quickening influence until its own life is imparted to the whole, and the desired change has been wrought in it. If it were not for the commonness of these things, they would excite the profoundest interest and wonder. The power of God is as really displayed in them as in what are called miracles.

Now to these marked developments of a hidden and expansive life in nature, Christ compares "the kingdom of heaven." There is an instructive analogy between the natural and spiritual world in the operations of this very law. There is a latent life, a silent, unconscious power in Christianity, that works out the purposes of God in a manner truly wonderful. Human Philosophy affects to despise the Gospel of salvation. To the eye of sense it *is* weak, unpromising "foolishness." It makes no noise or parade. It comes to us divested of all those features and elements which would naturally commend it to the human heart. Its progress is marked by no supernatural commotions, no extraordinary excitements, no grand effects patent to the "observation" of the world. It operates silently and unseen on the springs of thought and life, and on the sources of moral influence and moral feeling. Its beginnings are usually humble and unpromising, like a handful of leaven in three measures of meal; and no man or angel, previous to the *development* of its life and power, could anticipate its results. But these results or effects proclaim it to be "the power of God and the wisdom of God," according to a law Divine in its conception, and simple and sublime, yet all-comprehensive and all controlling in its workings. The "leaven" contains "the hidings of God's power"—the concentrated philosophy of Infinite Wisdom—the spirit of life and grace—the moulding, expansive, and vitalizing energy of a regenerating principle: and it needs no help from man—no adornment, no adventitious circumstances to give it success. Let it but be "hid"—no matter where, nor by what agency—be it in the heart of an individual sinner—or be it in the mass of human society—or be it in the body of a new idea or truth cast forth upon the world—or be it in the centre of vast systems of error and iniquity—that Divine leaven will *work* without let or aid from man; work silently, and by processes and agencies too subtle or deep for the observation or wisdom of the world to discover or comprehend. Its hidden power will turn and overturn, fuse and mould the elements of thought, and character, and outward growth—expand, subdue, overthrow, regenerate, and, finally, pervade the entire mass with its own living spirit, and impress upon it its own heavenly features, and produce in and upon it a moral change that is equivalent to a new creation. This is the very

genius of Christianity. God has chosen to regenerate this world on the same principle that "leaven" operates in producing its wonderful change—the law of silent, unconscious, expansive, all-permeating and all-prevailing *moral influence*. This law has signally characterized the entire history of "the kingdom of heaven" in the world. And we are to look for and expect no other law in the final issue of the matter. It is under this very law that the Gospel is to accomplish its great work in the world, and introduce the millennium of the Church. It is a law which requires *time* to bring about the proposed results; which cannot be defeated by the wickedness, nor materially hastened by the devices of man; a law which appeals to faith, and hope, and prayer, rather than to reason, observation and human aid. This world, in the loftiness of its pride, may quite overlook or despise this noiseless and unseen agency for human regeneration and improvement; and the Church of Christ, in her corruption, worldliness and unbelief, may come, practically, to feel that such an agency is unequal to her wants and emergency, and to sigh for and seek after something more imposing, and congenial with the spirit and progress of the age;—a man in his impatience and short-sighted wisdom, may find fault with Divine providence, whose chariot wheels, making so immense a circuit, scarcely seem to move; and in his rashness he may seek to hurry them on, or as he is ever wont to do, mount the chariot of popular delusion and drive himself headlong to ruin, instead of advancing the world to its day of final redemption

We have in this subject, brethren, a theme of profound interest and instruction. I regret that the limits of a single discourse will not allow me fully to traverse it. I must confine myself to a few of the many important illustrations which the providence of God has already developed, "that the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened."

1. We have a signal illustration of this law in *the History of God's Revelation to man.*

The Bible which contains it, is the consummated and grand result of a long series of supernatural communications, and of immensely varied and innumerable agencies, spread out over a period of four thousand years. Unlike the Koran, the Shaster, the Mormon Bible, and the sacred books of other spiritual delusions, the record of our faith did not drop down out of heaven entire and complete. There is a singularly and infinitely corroborating *providence* connected with its formation and its history. Its doctrines are not more supernatural than is the outward life, the earthly history, of that wonderful Book. It is a revelation not merely supernatural in its origin, and inspired in its teachings; but also a revelation actually and divinely *wrought out* in

the experience and history of man; inwrought into the ideas, the language, the literature, the social life, the governments, and the public sentiment and moral character of mankind. From its opening to its closing page, the attention, the study, and the scrutiny of the world were invited to it. The elements of a varied and wide-spread human experience were interwoven in its wonderful texture. Its primary and essential ideas were first hid in secret personal communications, and made to work there. In process of time they were embodied in national legislation and social worship; and when the fulness of time had come, the impress of a universal law was put upon them.

The germ of this entire revelation was the *solitary promise* which God gave to the first parents of our race when their sun had set in hopeless darkness. It was a little "leaven" and it worked a blessed change. Time added to it. Other promises followed. "The kingdom of heaven" was set up. The regenerating principle was implanted. The revelation gradually grew in the range of its doctrines, in the variety of its topics, and in the clearness and certainty of its discoveries and teachings, as the mind of man was fitted to receive and profit by it. The trial, the growth, the experience of *four thousand* years sufficed to complete the great and difficult work. The rays of scattered light were now all brought into a single burning focus; the coming of Christ was the explanation and the fulfilment of all that had gone before: the *Old* Testament had found its counterpart, its living life, its consummated development in the *New:* and the world had now reached mature age; it was in a condition favorable to receive "the whole counsel of God." The doctrine which underlies the whole Jewish Scriptures, and which the Jewish nation was chosen and preserved so long to illustrate and magnify before the world—"There is one God"—had battled successfully with the gross and deep-seated idolatry which had overspread the world and gained a sure lodgement in the human mind. The idea of the infinite atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which is the corner stone of the Christian Church, had been made familiar to mankind by the Old Testament sacrifices; and the elementary principles of the Gospel had been so long shadowed forth that the fulness of time had come for a complete development. As much of the ideas, and literature, and moral life of Divine Revelation had been diffused into the current literature, the legislation, and the moral sentiments of the world, and into the universal laws of civilized life, as Divine Wisdom saw to be essential to the full inauguration of "the kingdom of heaven." Then the record was finished—closed up—hid in the bosom of the Christian Church—sent forth on its high and glorious mission of regenerating power.

What an *outgrowth* of that original promise, which kept from absolute despair the first guilty pair of our race! What a vast

accumulation of supernatural ideas, of sublime doctrines, and of effective influences for good, upon the original doctrine, "There is one God!" In the knowledge essential to salvation; in the elements of power necessary to the world's regeneration; and in the system of agencies and means chosen of God to accomplish it—the kingdom of heaven now stands forth to the world complete. Nothing is wanting to it. It is the *perfected* agency of the wonder-working God, to bring about his purposes of sovereign mercy. It is the concentrated light and experience and moral influence of six thousand years of wonderful providential workings. The Bible, as containing the revelation of God to man—as the outgrowth, the matured kingdom, the final and consummated wisdom and power of the Godhead, challenges a *confidence* in its authority which no array of unbelief can shake, and a *faith* in its power and mission which no obstacle can discourage. Its antecedents, how godlike they are! This Book which it took God four thousand years to finish; which dates back to Paradise, and traces man down the track of ages to the consummation of all things; which owes its origin to the purpose of redeeming grace; which has gathered its materials from so many sources in ages past; which both reveals and at the same time affectingly illustrates and demonstrates the most elevated ideas, the most needful truths, the most awful realities, and the most fearful destiny for man which the world knows aught of,—what a mission of light and regenerating power has it to perform! Lodged in the vast heart of this dead world—its principles through so many centuries slowly winning their way to dominion—its ideas moulding the sentiments and tastes, and literature and life of mankind to itself—its great lines of influence extending along a thousand channels—its silent and unobstrusive work all the while going forward at the foundations of society, on the elementary principles, the processes and sources of power—its life-giving spirit slowly and almost imperceptibly but actually pervading immense masses of nominal Christians; and its unseen but irresistible power sapping the vast systems of error and iniquity, into which the wickedness of man has formed itself—the spirit of its sanctified enterprise going forth into all the world—the tides of its moral sentiments and sanctified influences rising higher and higher, and washing shore after shore—and gathering to itself, as age rolls on after age, fresh life and glory, and the augmented and developed resources of the world's material and moral prosperity; all this being true of it, it cannot fail of its ultimate end. The world cannot now go back. The "leaven" of progress and regeneration is fairly lodged in it. And it must work. It is working. We see and feel the far-reaching effects of its silent power. The regenerating, overcoming, all-assimilating process is going forward continually—faster than it seems to the eye of outward observation. It has been working

for ages and centuries. The seeds of great moral and religious changes are sown broadcast over the world. Ideas, principles, sentiments, problems, have been worked out and embedded in the human understanding and conviction. The world is ripe now for a higher and fuller development of the hidden Divine power and life of the Gospel. And sure as "leaven leaveneth the whole lump," so sure will "the kingdom of heaven," which has come down to man from God, mould this entire world into its own spirit and moral likeness.

II. The *History of the Christian Church* furnishes another illustration of the doctrine of the text.

How small and feeble were its early beginnings! To the eye of human reason and judgment, how utterly inadequate was such an agency to the work of regenerating this fearfully corrupt world! Transport yourselves, in imagination, back over the track of eighteen hundred years to the starting-point of that Power which is now so great and so hopeful. Jesus Christ has been crucified by his own Nation and Church, as an imposter. His disciples are so few in number that a small "upper-room" holds them all. They are friendless, without learning, without influence, simple-hearted, destitute of policy, and singularly wanting in all the elements and means of earthly power and success. And that little, feeble, obscure band of hated and despised men, constitutes "the kingdom of heaven!" And all the world is against them. Their own Nation and Church have cast them out, and sworn their extirpation. Philosophy, learning, power, rank, wealth, all present a bold and hostile front. Was there ever a more unpromising beginning! A more forlorn enterprise undertaken, judging of it by the rules of earthly wisdom! But those weak, defenceless, personally insignificant men, were masters of a principle, destined to work the actual regeneration of this entire world. In their unsophisticated and purified hearts was lodged a moral power adequate to grapple with "principalities, and powers, and wickedness in high places;" a power before which not even the Cæsars should be able to stand; whose simple story should confound the wisest philosophers of Greece and Rome, and vacate the thousand seats of antiquated idolatry and change the hatred of man into love;—a power mighty enough, by a noiseless, unseen, spiritual influence, to alter, in time, the whole face of society, and *transform* the entire race, in all the essentials of social and moral being, and gather all nations and climes, and races of men into the one kingdom of Jesus Christ. The "leaven" of God's power and wisdom and of the Holy Spirit's regenerating influence was wrapt up in the simple faith of those men, and hid in their renewed hearts. And hence it mattered not how small and feeble was the visible organization of this heavenly kingdom, or how insignificant the body which was to re-

ceive this Divine life. One mind open to receive the truth; one heart, touched and purified by grace, was enough. It only needed a place in the human mind and heart to hide the leaven in, and bring it into contact with the living mass of being surrounding it. The power to work, change regenerate, was in the "*leaven*," not in man. Once hid in the heart of the world, and it could not be plucked out; its power could not be restrained; no barrier could arrest its progress, no outward pressure restrain its expansive energy. According to the laws of its own nature it *must* work, expand, infuse its living spirit, and go on with its silent but irresistible process of fermentation and assimilation till it reaches the limits fixed by the purpose of God.

How quickly and how powerfully that "leaven" worked in the first age of the Church, we are all informed. It began at Jerusalem as soon as the scene of the crucifixion had closed. It began with the murderers of our Lord. It thence spread to other lands and other nations. It worked its way silently and unobtrusively to the hearts of multitudes scattered over the Roman Empire; its doctrines and its life forced an entrance into the chief cities of Asia, into the schools of renowned philosophy, into "Cæsar's household," into the high places of power, into social life, into the learning and literature and legislation of the world. The more it was persecuted, the more it spread. The kingdom of heaven which had arisen in such obscurity, and which borrowed nothing from the world, and had been stoutly resisted and cordially hated, was soon established beyond the possibility of overthrow, and spread out its power and sent forth its life among the nations.

In a similar way the Gospel has since made its way in the world. As "leaven" has it worked wherever it has been "hid." The history of its rise and spread in every nation, in every community, wherever it has prevailed, will strikingly confirm this remark. The history of Missions to the heathen in our own day, is furnishing a remarkable commentary on the words of our text. The Gospel has never worked as other powers work, to bring about its results. Its laws are peculiarly its own. It has never begun with the *mass* but with *individual* men. It has never attacked sin in the aggregate, in its organic life, or as an enthroned system, but as a personal individual offence. It has never begun with the outward man and worked its way to the heart—with the effects and thence sought to reach the causes—at the circumference, and worked inward to the core—at the extremities to infuse life into the heart. This is after the laws and workings of human wisdom. "The kingdom of heaven," on the contrary, has always begun at the *seat* of sin, at the *sources* of moral influence, at the *fountains* of moral and social life. Deep in the heart of individual man, it hides the "leaven," or wraps it up in some principle of faith, or some new idea or experience, which some obscure

person or agency is made to "hold forth"—and there it is left to work its way to the outward life, to gather strength to itself noiselessly and unconsciously; to quicken heart after heart, carry captive mind after mind, work its way down to the foundations of things, and slowly but surely spread forth its power over wider and ever-widening circles—gradually penetrating the masses, and originating and carrying forward processes of agitation, reformation, and quickening life, which will one day surely inaugurate a new and more glorious and perfected dispensation. The "leaven" which the *missionary* carries with him, in the Word of God, and in a sanctified and praying heart, and hides in the corrupt and vast heart of Heathenism, is sufficient to work just such a glorious and extensive change as the Gospel wrought in primitive times, and has since wrought in numberless instances. The "leaven" which the providence of God conveys to and hides in the longing desires, and holy purposes, and evangelical views of some humble soul; be it that he is the sole embodiment of "the kingdom of heaven" in that community; be it that naught but frowning masses of error, and ignorance, and corruption, and death surround him; be it even that a dungeon or martyrdom awaits him—that "leaven" has a wonderful mission to perform. It will spread in spite of decrees, prisons, persecutions. It is the germ of a moral resurrection for that people "The power of God" is hid there, and it will surely work its way to conquest and dominion.

III. *The History of Opinions or Doctrines*, originating in or essential to the kingdom of heaven, is a *third* fruitful source of illustration.

It were an exceedingly interesting and profitable task to trace back to their very origin those fundamental principles in Science, Philosophy, and Theology, which are now generally received; and the various reformations which have been achieved, from time to time, in morals, in religion, in social, and political life, since the Gospel begun its work.

Take the great Reformation under Luther. The Bible had become an unknown book. The Church had taken the place of Christ; penance that of justification by faith; the confessional that of the mercy seat. And the whole world was wrapt in the darkness of a long and terrible night of superstition and death. But an obscure monk, in the peculiar workings of the Spirit of God on his mind, sighs for light, longs for deliverance from the burden of sin. He finds an old and long neglected copy of the Bible. He reads, wonders, admires, weeps, prays, wrestles—and rises from his knees a new man!—master of a new principle!—a new idea has taken possession of him!—a new life courses through all his veins! The "leaven" of evangelical doctrine is there, and in it the power of God destined to work the

most signal reformation that the world had witnessed since apostolic times. He communicates with his brother monks. The leaven spreads. This new principle which he sees so clearly, and the power of which has wrought such a great and happy change in himself—"justification by faith alone in Jesus Christ"—becomes the *master idea* of his life. He gathers courage and strength from it. It makes him the centre and the instrument of a mighty moral power. He preaches it with startling earnestness. He lifts up his thundering voice in the ears of a dead church and proclaims it. He battles for it. He grapples with popes, and cardinals, and legates, and princes, and kings, and emperors, and fights his way onward through hosts of persecutors and opposers. All Germany is in commotion. The new doctrine strikes its roots deep in the bosom of the church, and in the very heart of the world. The "leaven" spreads, agitates the long-stagnant mind of mankind, infuses dew ideas of religion, of liberty, of life; works a wide-spread and glorious reformation, both in church and state; frees the Bible and the human conscience from priestly tyranny; gives the death-blow to the Papacy, and sows broadcast those seeds of evangelical truth which are still yielding their golden harvests.

At a *later* period Cæsar and Anti-Christ combined to put down the spirit of religious liberty which was rising in Europe. In Scotland a noble band of men entered into a "solemn league and covenant" to defend that principle, cost what it would. They resisted with blood. They flung their banner to the breeze, and in the name of the God of liberty and Lord of the conscience, battled as life. Long did the carnage rage. Their solid mountains trembled under the shock of hostile armies. But that principle was a part of the "leaven of the kingdom of heaven." Live it would; triumph it did. It gained a footing on its own free soil. It passed the Tweed. It infused itself into the Commonwealth of England. It finally, after many struggles and bloody conflicts, moulded the constitution of Britain into what it is. It took firm root in that land, and has made that people eminently prosperous, and the most influential for good of any on earth. That principle was the characteristic principle of the *Puritans*. The Pilgrim Fathers brought it here. It was the precious freight of the Mayflower. And here it spread, and grew, and prevailed. It has given us our free institutions. It fought the battles of our Revolution. It has raised us to a commanding place among the nations. It makes us the terror of despots and the hope of the oppressed of all nations. It his here fast solving the great problems involved in political government; and under the benign sway of a free evangelical faith is working out a bright destiny for the world. The spirit of religious liberty is the "leaven" of God's power; it is one of the essential elements of his kingdom. It is his in the great heart of the

world. It has been silently working there for ages and centuries. It begins now to force its way to the surface of society, and we witness its upheavings and convulsions: the masses of mankind now feel its quickening and uprising power: and all the pressure which popes and despots can lay upon it cannot repress this living spirit. It has its great work to do. It has been at that appointed work noiselessly and unceasingly in ages past; it is at it now; and it will go on to complete it in spite of all opposition, leavening the entire lump.

IV. Finally. The *history of individual conversions* strikingly illustrates the principle of the text.

How wonderful is the way that God usually brings about his purpose in this particular. Seldom are sinners converted in a *sudden and violent* manner, like Saul of Tarsus, or the thief on the cross. Conviction may suddenly and powerfully seize on a man, and he yields at once to Christ. But how many and varied are the *antecedents* of that final development and submission! What long processes have conducted to this result! What accumulations of light, thought, feeling, motives, experiences, and moral influences were there before he yielded! No man can lay his finger on the *beginning* of the kingdom of God in his soul; or on the *particular* agency which converted him. A serious thought, an unconscious impression, a casual word, a providential visitation, may be the "leaven" which the Holy Spirit hides in his heart. Unseen and unobserved there that leaven works. It gains an influence over the man. It waxes stronger; it begins to agitate his mind; the favourable time comes, and suddenly, it may be, there is a development outward; the heart is too full to contain all it feels; convictions have grown too deep to be resisted; the light of shining within is so clear he dare no longer sin against it. "The kingdom of heaven" approached him in so quiet a way—worked by influences and agencies so subtle, and noiseless, and unobserved, that, before he was fairly conscious of its presence, he had submitted to it. It came not in the way of "observation;" not heralded by trumpets; not with "a great and strong wind," or with an "earthquake and fire," smoke and earthquakes, but in an unseen way, by unconscious and quiet influences, in "the still small voice" which spoke only to the heart within.

This is the way that God usually converts men. Only God would have ever thought of such a way to bring about a saving change in man. But it is a way in manifest accordance with the philosophy of our being. It was a standing proof also that the kingdom of God is not of this world, and owes none of its success to man.

We name three concluding remarks, out of many, which this subject suggests.

1. *We are not to despise the day of small things* in regard to "the kingdom of heaven." We are ever prone to judge of this kingdom as we judge of other things. But in doing so we sin against its manifest laws, and against the entire history of its progress. The day of small things with man, is the day of great things with God! God has chosen this very way to regenerate the world in preference to any other, and he has uniformly honored and magnified it in his providence. No way, that we can conceive of, so signally displays the wisdom of God's counsels, the self-sustaining and self-propagating energy of truth, the power of grace, the unfailing and everlasting character of those principles and purposes which underlie his government. His kingdom on earth is not one of material power, or violent force, or arbitrary will; but a kingdom of spiritual truths, and moral influences, which, from their very nature, cannot operate primarily on the aggregate ignorance and wickedness of the world, and must take time to work out their destined results. Wherever the "kingdom of heaven" is—be it in the solitary heart of an obscure Christian, or in the centre of fearful masses of superstition and wickedness—there the power of the Highest will surely be displayed. Wherever we can hide the "leaven" of the Gospel—be it in the weakest instruments—in the humblest agencies—in the most obscure places—in the feeblest conceptions, and the slightest impressions, and the most unpromising fields—there we may confidently look for blessed results, sooner or later. O, put the "leaven," the precious wonder-working "leaven" of the Gospel, wherever you can find a mind or a heart to receive it, and God will see that it does its work!

2. We see in this law *the reason why God makes such a selection of the subjects of his grace.* He does not convert a whole nation, or city, or town, or neighborhood, or family, often. Man would have gone to work this way. On the contrary, He chooses one here and another there. He takes one from a family, and ten from a tribe. And he does this that he may get the "leaven" into all the circles of being, and of influence, and of wickedness, and irreligion. It is that he may get it into contact with more hearts than he could in any other way; and cause it to work in its daily and intimate and most favored contact with the world to bring about its proposed change.

3. We infer *hope for the world* from our subject. The "leaven of the kingdom of heaven" is hid in it. It has been working its way in it, silently, but surely and permanently, for sixty centuries. It is working now by a thousand mysterious processes—along numberless living channels—by irresistable agencies, in the heart and conscience, and sentiments and life of the world. The lines of its influence are going out into all the earth. There are signs, unmistakable, that the hoary systems of error and iniquity feel to their centre the power of this kingdom, and that the

mighty mass of human mind begins to be moved by the expansive and quickening energy of the Gospel. That leaven *will* work and nothing can hinder it. It is the hidings of God's power, and nothing can withstand it; and all the world shall one day confess its all-subduing agency and come under the sway of its dominion.

THE WEST.

THE West may now be regarded as the great battle-field of the world—the place where probably, more than anywhere else, the destinies of the world are to be decided. The struggle which is going on there for the mastery is to be more important in its issue than that of any battle ever fought in the plain of Esdraelon—more important than the result of the strife at Marathon, at Cannæ, at Bunker Hill, at Waterloo. More individuals are now and are to be, engaged in the struggle; more interests are at stake; more powerful minds will be engaged; more talent will be developed; and more momentous results will follow. The eye of the world is, and shall be, fixed with a more intense interest on that struggle than any which has ever occurred on the earth, for the ultimate issue will be more far-reaching and mighty. The centre of power in this nation has already gone from Plymouth, from New York, from Philadelphia, from *Washington*, over the Alleghanies, and is moving with fearful rapidity to the centre of that great valley—perhaps soon will have passed Cincinnati, and reached St. Louis. If this nation is to be free, the population of that valley is to preserve and perpetuate our freedom; if it is to be enslaved, the chains that are to fetter us are to be forged beyond the mountains. When Fisher Ames wished to raise the note of alarm at what he deemed a measure of most dangerous policy, he said that, if he had the power, he would lift his voice so that it would reach every log-house beyond the mountains. He who now seeks to rouse his country to a sense of her danger, must seek so to speak that his voice may be heard in all the cities, towns, and villages of the East—in those places where the battles for freedom have been fought, and where there is still power to send out an influence that shall determine the scale of victory in the great conflicts of the West. The struggle there is for the rule. It is to determine what shall be the governing mind of that vast land. Shall it be barbarism? Shall it be infidelity? Shall it be the Roman Catholic system? Shall it be evangelical religion? Never were there so many passions and powers contending in any other conflict; never was a field so large; never was the prospective crown of victory so dazzling.—*Rev. Albert Barnes.*

SERMON DCLII.

BY REV. AMZI BENEDICT,
BROOKLYN, NEW-YORK,

MINISTERIAL SUPPORT.

"Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."—1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.

"Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."—Gal. vi. 6, 7.

"And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had."—Luke xxi. 1—4.

I have seen it stated in one of the religious papers, that the last General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church instructed its ministers to preach a faithful discourse on ministerial support. In accordance with these instructions, I purpose to do so at the present time.* The subject is clearly set forth in the passages of Scripture which have just been read; and it may be presented with sufficient distinctness in the following propositions.

First. It is the will of God that ministers of the Gospel who devote themselves to their work, should receive a comfortable and liberal support for themselves and their families, as the result of their labors.

Secondly. Their support "is not a charitable donation, but a debt justly due, and cannot be withheld without injustice to them and dishonor to Christ."†

Thirdly. The good of the people, and the prosperity of religion require that they should receive such support as has been specified.

I. *It is the will of God that ministers of the Gospel who devote themselves to their work, should receive a comfortable and liberal support for themselves and their families, as the result of their labors.*

But what is a comfortable and liberal support? It is such a support as will enable a minister to live, where he resides and labors, as well as his people live who are in comfortable circumstances,—such as will enable him to obtain the comforts and conveniences of life for his family, and for the friends and strangers

* March, 1855. † Family Testament on 1 Cor. ix. 14.

who may visit him, as his people do for themselves and their friends,—such as will furnish him with the necessary means of travelling more or less, when duty calls, as his people do, and of procuring such periodicals and books as are necessary to his greatest usefulness as a minister of Christ No support can properly be called *liberal*, which does not enable him, over and above what has been specified, to lay by something in store for a time of need—of sickness, of infirmity, of old age, or of inability from whatever cause to pursue his professional duties successfully.

There are churches and congregations which provide, with promptitude and cheerfulness, a comfortable and liberal support for those who minister to them in holy things; and all concerned reap the happy fruits of their faithful doings. This should be the fact universally, where God has given to a people the requisite means, so that nothing is wanting but a *willingness* on their part to perform the incumbent duty. The truth of this position is evident,

1. *From the nature of the case.*

Those generally, who devote themselves to the ministry, could easily obtain such a support for themselves and their families, by entering seasonably on other lawful and honorable pursuits; and it is perfectly right and proper that they should do so at any time, if their people who can, will not furnish the requisite means. Indeed, ministers as well as other men must provide for their own, and specially for those of their own house, or they are charged by the apostle with having denied the faith, and being worse than infidels. It is unreasonable, absurd, and wicked that a minister and his family should be confined to a stinted allowance like town paupers, or put on small rations like a ship's company in danger of starvation, while his people are flourishing in prosperous circumstances, with abundant means of comfort. Were a people for whom I labored *really poor*, I would divide the last loaf of bread with them, and labor on contentedly. But where many of them are rich and increased in goods, having an abundance laid up for future necessities and comforts, and much more besides, the case becomes a very different one—different in the sight of God and of every honest man. Were a minister preaching the Gospel to the heathen, who know not its value and are therefore incapable of appreciating its inestimable importance to the temporal and eternal welfare of men, it would be right—it would be Christ-like in him—if the means of support could not otherwise be obtained, to endure self-denial, hardship, proverty and toil, that he might bring them to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. But, that among Christians fully persuaded of the truth of Christianity and of the blessings it confers on men—that a minister to *such* a people is called to a life of privation and hardship, while they are well supplied with this world's goods and are adding house to house and field to field, is utterly preposterous.

That a minister who devotes himself to his work should receive a comfortable and liberal support as the result of his *ministerial labors*,—not as the result of farming, keeping school, or peddling books,—is abundantly evident from the nature of the case itself, and from the dictates of common sense. But,

2. *It is still more evident from the Scriptures.*

In the ancient church of God, the people were required to bring offerings daily, and of various kinds into the temple for the service of the sanctuary; and they who performed that service were supported by the offerings which were thus presented. "They who minister about holy things live of the things of the temple, and they who wait at the altar are partakers with the altar." But in later times, when religion was in a low state among the Jews, the people neglected to bring in their offerings, according to Divine direction; which greatly displeased the Lord, and called forth his severest rebukes. For so doing, he accused them of "robbing God." And they said, "Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." They did not furnish an adequate supply for the service of the temple, and the support of those who ministered at the altar. He then said to them, "Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in mine house," provision for the service of the temple, "and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."—(Mal. iii. 10.) Such declarations show clearly what the will of God was, on this subject.

That this provision for the service of the sanctuary was not designed simply for the individual himself, who ministered at the altar, but also for his *family*, is abundantly evident from the Scriptures. This is particularly declared in the tenth chapter of Leviticus and in the eighteenth of Numbers, and is addressed to Aaron as the representative of a class—as the head of the priesthood. "And the wave-brest and heave-shoulder shall ye eat in a clean place; *thou*, and thy *sons*, and thy *daughters* with thee: for they are *thy due*, and thy *son's* due, which are given out of the sacrifices of peace-offerings of the children of Israel." "And this is thine; the heave-offering of their gift, with all the wave-offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and *to thy sons*, and *to thy daughters* with thee, by a statute forever; every one that is clean in thy house shall eat it. All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the first fruits of them which they shall offer unto the Lord, *them* have I given thee. Every thing devoted in Israel shall be thine."

This language is sufficiently explicit. The people were not permitted to separate the children of the priest from his family, in the provision they made for his maintenance, and place a son here and a daughter there, to take care of themselves, while the

people provided a stinted support for one, or two at most, in the family of him who performed the service of the sanctuary; but they were required to make ample provision for the whole family.

This principle, so explicitly laid down in the Old Testament respecting the support of the Levitical priesthood, the apostle clearly states in the text, and then applies it to the Christian ministry under the New Testament dispensation. "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that *they who preach the Gospel* should *live* of the Gospel"—by their profession, as the ministers of Christ.

As to the *source* whence their support should come, the apostle is equally explicit. "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things"—things needful for his support. He adds, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked:" there is no deceiving him by any feigned or partial performance of the duty in question, nor any escape from the consequences of neglecting it:—"for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." He may save his money, if that is all he lives for; but the Lord may visit him for it in some other way—he may send leanness into his soul, and the souls of his family.

In accordance with the view we have taken of this subject, the last General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church adopted,* "unanimously," the following preamble and resolution addressed at all the churches under their care; of which this church is one.

"*Whereas*, it is highly important to our churches, that they be served by competent ministers, who shall be free from worldly cares and avocations; whereas, the law of Christ expressly declares that, 'they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel,' and that 'he that is taught in the word' should 'communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things,' thus making it the solemn duty, as it is clearly the interest of Christian churches to provide for their ministers a competent and liberal support; whereas the cost of the necessities of life has advanced so greatly as to render the salaries heretofore paid to many of our ministers entirely inadequate, causing to them and to their families great anxiety and distress; and whereas, this subject demands at this time, and should not fail to attract, the special attention of every Christian; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That the General Assembly earnestly exhort all the churches under their care to consider this question in the spirit of Christian fidelity and liberality, and to make ample provision for those who minister to them in word and doctrine; stipulating so to increase their compensation when necessary, as to make their salaries fully *adequate* to their comfortable support in view of the enchanced expenses of living; and paying the amount agreed upon with honorable and Christian promptitude."

This preamble and resolution need no comment.

* Session of 1854

II. *That comfortable and liberal support which ministers should receive "is not a charitable donation, but, a debt justly due, and cannot be withheld without injustice to them and dishonor to Christ."*

Some persons appear to think it is not so. They may not avow it. They may not be conscious that they think so; and yet, they talk and act very much as if they regarded a minister's support as a matter of charity, and the minister himself as a kind of church pauper. They do not feel that they *owe* him a *just debt*, but think themselves at liberty to give him, whether for one Sabbath or many, just what compensation they please, without reference to the principles in the case laid down in the Scriptures; and they expect him to be very acquiescent and very grateful for whatever he receives—whether half what justice requires, or more, or less. They seem to feel about it very much as they do respecting a beggar who comes to their door to ask for charity—expecting him to receive very thankfully whatever is given him, and to think himself well off if he gets anything at all. But all this is contrary to the Scriptures and common sense. When Christ sent forth his disciples to proclaim his coming and kingdom, he told them to go empty-handed, adding as a reason, that "the laborer is worthy of his hire"—his support—a fair compensation for his services. Yet, contrary to this plain truth, some consider it a great point gained—whatever their personal ability may be—to get the services of a minister for a consideration far short of what is equitable, and at as low a rate as possible; (on the principle, I suppose, that "a penny saved is as good as a penny earned;) and if they can "shave" him a little now and then under some pretext or other, why, so much the better. They seem to think it no more of a sin "to shave" a minister, than Papists do to lie to a Protestant. And, truly enough, the morality of both is just about the same.*

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* Things of this kind are but too often practised in large cities and elsewhere during the absence of their pastors, in strong as well as weak congregations. Many of them do what is right and honorable; but others think it enough, perhaps, to pay their own minister. If a distinguished stranger on a journey does not come within their reach till the Sabbath draws nigh, they, as a last resort, apply to a resident minister who, though not engaged for the time being, is wholly dependent on his labors for the support of his family. Either expressly or by implication he supposes it to be mutually understood, as it always ought to be, that he is to receive a fair compensation for his services. Though the people have means enough to live in style, and some of them are in possession of wealth, yet they "communicate unto him" who has faithfully "taught them in the word," little or no pecuniary compensation; pleading their burdens, or thinking the honor of occupying *their* pulpit a sufficient remuneration for his services—thus wickedly sending anguish into a domestic circle where the hand of poverty presses hard. Cases of the kind are not wanting where pastors have favoured this cupidity of their people who *felt* poor, apparently to ease troubled consciences or to avoid giving them offence. But a minister who does this thing understandingly, *so far as as his doings are known to hearers of Christian integrity and uprightness*, might as well beat upon a sounding brass for half an hour as to preach. He who can thus send a pang to the heart of a brother's family is unworthy the *name* of brother.

A well qualified minister has spent about nine years in preparation for his work, and very likely all his patrimony and more too; and yet, some expect him to throw in all this as of no account, and to labour for a bare subsistence for the time being, and even for much less than that sometimes. He must not lay up any thing against a time of need, as men of other professions do, and as his people do; that would be quite too much. He must not expect anything to aid him in the education of his children, or in preparing them for business and usefulness; a thing which he, as well as every other parent, is bound to do. However laborious he may be, he must expect simply a present subsistence, and that with great care and economy; and when his health fails, or age and infirmity prevent his further labors, he must make the best of it, and come upon the charity of his friends, or of the Christian public.

I know cases of this kind—they are no fiction. But this is doing great wrong and injustice to the faithful ministers of Christ. They have the same right and duty to make suitable provision for their families and for future necessities, which men in other professions and occupations have. Because they are ministers, this does not annihilate their obligations and duties as Christian parents and heads of families. Many feel the embarrassing condition in which the ministry places them in this respect, and are leaving it and engaging in other kindred and in remoter occupations, to relieve themselves from the embarrassment. Many young men of much promise—of superior natural endowments and ardent piety, who would gladly enter the ministry, are prevented from so doing on this very account: and they do right, in the circumstances of the case. For it would be throwing most of them into such straitened circumstances as would cramp their efforts and greatly curtail their usefulness. They are therefore satisfied that they can exert a wider influence upon the kingdom of Christ by engaging in some other occupation.

A few weeks since, I noticed in a western Presbyterian paper an article exactly in point, headed, "Retiring from the Ministry." The editor says that on visiting a Methodist Conference a few months before, he was struck with the large proportion of young men in the ranks of its itinerant ministry. This fact he thinks in part accounted for, in an article written by one of their ministers who had been an itinerant for more than twenty years.

"The unnecesary privations and sufferings of our preachers, even in the service of old and wealthy societies, *is now operating to thin out and reduce our ministerial ranks.* Many are absolutely driven out by poverty; many are disgusted by the cold indifference of the churches they serve, and retire in disaffection; many being worn out personally, or having families in feebleness, are compelled to leave. And what is more—and alarmingly common—the very best portion of our ministry, with expensive

or feeble families, are finding sufficient excuse to accept what are being continually offered to them—presidencies, professorships, principalships, editorships, agencies, etc."

On this extract the editor thus comments:—"The process here described is not confined entirely to the Methodist Church. Other denominations are feeling its influence. *Any Church which does not provide an adequate support for its ministers and their families, is drying up its own life's blood by the process;* and it will see and feel the effect when it is probably too late to remedy the evil. An *unsupported* ministry must necessarily become a *secular* one, and to that degree an *inefficient* one. At the time when men are prepared, by their age and experience, to become efficient, they find their families growing so upon their hands that they must turn aside from their direct work to procure a support for them; and thus the Church is deprived of their labors and loses far more than she gains by the process of starving them."

I would only add,—that such is the fact in more than one or two denominations may easily be seen, if any one will take the trouble carefully to look into our large cities and towns—not to say the smaller ones—and accurately note the number of ministers, in the vigor of life, and well qualified for their work, who have become editors, publishers, book-keepers, merchants, farmers, school teachers, agents, secular and religious, or have entered into other occupations still. Most of them would greatly prefer to labor in the ministry, *if they could so abide*, and receive the necessary support.

To withhold a comfortable and liberal support from the Christian ministry, *dishonors Christ.* To disobey his laws, on this subject as well as any other, always dishonors him; just as it dishonors God to disobey him, and as children dishonor their parents by disobeying them. The laws which Christ has given on this subject are just and right in themselves, and indispensable to the well-being of the Christian ministry and the church of God; and to disobey them, is casting reproach upon the Lawgiver—upon his wisdom, his justice, or his benevolence. He has given himself to die for them, that he might redeem them from the just desert of their sins; and yet they love the world so much more than they do their Lord and Saviour, that they cast his laws behind their backs. What dishonor is thus done to the Redeemer!

III. *The good of the people and the prosperity of religion require that ministers should receive such a support as has been specified.*

People are apt to place little value on that which costs them little or nothing. If they have to make great effort, and practice great self-denial, in order to secure the able and faithful preaching of the Gospel, they will prize it the more, and it will do them

the more good. The very effort will weaken their love of the world and strengthen their love to Christ and his cause, and the souls of men. When they give only what they can just as well as not, and often very much less than that, it contracts their minds, hardens their hearts, and renders them more worldly and selfish; thus presenting to every benevolent and holy mind an object painful to behold. But self-denial and liberality in giving for the support of the Gospel, wakes up a religious interest among a people and prepares the way for religion to prosper as it otherwise would not. A general and needful effort of this kind serves to strengthen and invigorate the Christian graces of a whole church.

Yesterday, I took up a religious paper which fell in my way and saw an article, headed, "Feeble Churches." It stated that a church in a small New England village, which had long felt itself unable to give a competent support to its pastor, had recently been divided. A portion of its members had gone and built another house of worship a mile or two distant, which cost four thousand dollars, and a parsonage which cost two thousand; and the two churches now give their pastors a salary, one of seven hundred dollars, and the other eight hundred—considerably more than double the amount, besides the expenditure in buildings, which they had unitedly felt themselves able to give to their pastor. This fact is an illustration of the evident truth, that, generally in matters of this kind, *ability* is *willingness;* and of the Latin maxim, "they can, because they think they can"—a state of mind which it is very important should more frequently be prevalent.

If the feeble church I am now addressing were to declare itself free and independent of all foreign aid,—Home Missionary Society and everything else,—and its members were to give, each one, according to the ability which God has given him, and no more, they might themselves provide an ample support for a minister; and the effort would greatly enlarge their hearts, wake up an interest in favor of the Gospel which will not otherwise be felt, and might result in filling your house with hearers on whom the spirit of God might be poured out, till the church should be greatly enlarged, strengthened, and built up in the faith and in practical godliness.

All this might be accomplished, I doubt not, if each one of you practically considered himself as "a steward of God," entrusted with his Lord's goods that he may use them in building up his kingdom, according to his will, and as circumstances require. In that case, several of you probably might give for the support of the Gospel among you, without depriving you of a single personal or domestic comfort, from one to two hundred dollars each in a year, and others less, in proportion to their ability; and thus the object be accomplished at once. Brethren, try it—*try it.*

If you hesitate respecting it, go and ask your Lord if he would be displeased, should you give two or three times as much of his goods for the support of the Gospel, as you do now; and whether he prefers that you should hoard them up for your own use, or to swell your bequests. Be conscientious in the matter, and see what answer you would get.

But some persons may have been so long in the habit of giving *a certain amount*, as their proportion of the sum you have thought proper to raise for the support of the Gospel, that they think it would require too much effort and self-denial to increase that amount very much. Besides they wish to have the sum raised by the people so small, that the latter may be induced to exercise their *benevolence*, as is meet, in giving something to charitable objects; leaving the minister to supply the deficiency in the provision for his support, in some other way. I confess this looks a little like "robbing Peter to pay Paul." Instead of this, let people provide, justly and liberally, for the support of the Gospel among themselves; and if this should call for the exercise of self-denial, on account of their former habits of giving, the effort will impart to them moral strength, and they will have more ability to contribute to benevolent objects; and thus it will do them the more good. In that case, some may not be able to accumulate quite as much every year, and add it to their estates; though the difference will scarcely be perceptible; and then they would honor Christ and their Christian profession far more.

But how can it be done? I will suppose that, besides the profits of your farm or of your business, you have money at interest, on bond and mortgage perhaps—five hundred dollars here, one thousand there, five thousand there, and the like. Perhaps some one may wish to take up his mortgage, about this time, —I know nothing about it,—and you hardly know where to put the money for safe and profitable investment. Put it in here—for the service of the church of Christ—and it will be the most safe and profitable investment you can have. You now get only seven per cent. interest; and what is that to a steward of Jesus Christ, going to give account of his stewardship to his Lord? Invest it where it will tell on the interests of his kingdom, and it may yield you an hundred fold in this present life, and in the world to come life everlasting. *Can* you do better than that?

But perhaps you cannot give much now, because you are husbanding your property and letting it accumulate so as to *give it to the Lord in your last Will and Testament:* as some others have done. Yes, and when they died, a long list of their bequests were published in the papers, sounding very large. Mr. —— of ——— died last week, and left the following bequests to religious and benevolent objects. So many thousand dollars to the American Bible Society; so many thousand to the American Tract Society; so many thousand to the American Home Mis-

sionary Society; so many thousand to Foreign Missions, the Education Society, the Orphan Asylum, and some others, not wholly forgetting the church of which he was a member. This is very well, at last, but he might have done much better. And what an impression did it all make on intelligent men who knew him and his manner of life? Why, they said, in substance—this man kept his money very close, so long as he had any use for it; he was hard in his dealing with others; he thought it not necessary for ministers to have much salary, or to lay up anything for the necessities for the future; he kept his property as long as he could, and when he *must* leave it, he gave it to to the Lord! to whom it belonged before. Does the intelligent Christian community honor such a man as an exemplary, consistent Christian? By no means. But let the Christian who holds a considerable amount of the Lord's property, in trust, use it, while he lives, in promoting the best interests of Christ's kingdom, and when he dies dispose aright of what may remain; and the whole community will honor him in life, and after he is dead, his name will de held in precious and lasting remembrance.

I remember a case exactly in point. Several years ago there lived in New England a rich man, but without any family of his own. In point of wealth, he was far superior to any man in the place; but was hard in his dealings, would grind the face of the poor, and did as little as possible for the interest of religion, or the benefit of the town where he lived. In his will, he gave most of his estate for the establishment of a philanthropic institution of a peculiar type, in another and larger town, by means of which his name would be handed down to posterity. A few months after his death, one of his neighbours said to me: "I thought as I was standing by the side of Mr. ——'s coffin, 'There you cannot carry your money away with you, and you cannot occupy any more ground now than the rest of us.'" I do not say that this feeling was right; but you see the effect of such a course of "withholding more than is meet. Had that man, while he lived, made a liberal use of his property for the benefit of the church, of society, and of the suffering poor and needy around him, the whole population would have flocked around his coffin,—men, women and children,—and the big tear falling down their cheek would have testified how deeply they felt that they had lost a friend.

I ought to say a word respecting Christ's estimate of men's giving according to *their ability;* as expressed in the case of the rich men and the poor widow, who cast money into the treasury of the Lord. The rich cast in of their abundance; the poor widow cast in "two mites," each about one-third of a cent, or two-thirds of a cent in the whole; and yet Christ declared that this poor widow according to his view of the case, had contributed more than all the rich put together. They had exercised no self-denial, but had given only a part of what they could spare

just as well as not; she had given all her living. That act of self-denial—that high regard actually manifested for God and his service, exalted her greatly in the estimation of Him whose approbation is worth having.

Some people have very erroneous views of the relative ability of men to give to religious and benevolent objects, and of the gift itself, in the sight of God. I will suppose two cases for illustration. Here is a man—the representative of a large class in the Christian community—a man in quite independent circumstances. He has his farm, his flocks and herds, his money at interest, his bank and rail-road stock, and is altogether above-board. After expending plentifully for the comfort of his family for the improvement of his farm, farm-stock, and farming utensils, and for a few additional acres to his already large farm, he has several hundred, perhaps several thousand dollars a year remaining, to be invested somewhere. Now, suppose he gives one-tenth of this remainder, after his other expenses are met; does he give one-tenth of his actual *income*, according to the scripture sense of the term "one-tenth?" By no means. That denotes the tenth of his *whole* income, before his expenditures for those comforts and improvements are made, and not afterwards. Just as Jacob vowed to the Lord, that if he would prosper him so that he came again to his father's house in peace, "then" said he, "of *all* that thou shalt give me"—not the net profits simply—"I will surely give the tenth unto thee." Suppose this wealthy man, out of his clear and unexpended *gains*, gives two or three hundred dollars a year to religious objects; there are several hundreds, perhaps several thousands of dollars which are not reckoned in his income at all. But here is another man with a large family, having very little property of any kind, who with great care, industry and labor, succeeds in meeting his necessary expenses for the year. Some how or other, he contrives to give five or six dollars a year to religious and benevolent objects. In the estimation of Him who sat over against the treasury and observed how the people cast gifts into it, which of these two men contribute most to religious objects? This poor man, surely—more beyond comparison; although the nominal sum is far less. The other would not give as much as this man, even if he gave the whole of his net income and much more besides. For he has the bulk of his property left and an abundant provision for his family in case he should be taken from them; whereas the poor man would leave his family almost or quite penniless.

It may, however, be said—though I hope not—that all this would be very well, if men were what they should be; but as they are not, *we must take them as they are, and not as they should be.*

Whence came this maxim. Whatever its origin may have been, it certainly never came down from heaven. Put it along

side of that golden maxim which Christ brought with him from heaven, and see how they compare with each other: Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." Admirable maxim—fitted to make men happy everywhere! Now, compare it with that other maxim: "We must take men as they are, not as they should be." If this meant, that when men are not what they should be, we should kindly take them in hand, and try to make them better; it would be very well. But its meaning seems to be, "If men are not disposed to do right but deliberately intend to do injustice or wrong, let them do so without disturbing their consciences very much, lest they be offended." So, then, if a man of wealth, who is known to be dishonest or to love wine and strong drink, should apply for admission to the church, admit him—"take him as he is, not as he should be."

How does such a maxim compare with Christ's golden rule; Surely it came not from heaven, but from the earth, or from *under* the earth. It seems intended to relieve men's consciences when not acting with Christian honesty and uprightness. It is by no means a Christian maxim, and is unworthy of a place in the Christian church.

Thus have I endeavoured to perform the service which I undertook to do. As to the practical application of the subject, I have not much to say; but shall leave you all to make such application of it for yourselves; hoping that you will do it faithfully and successfully.

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SERMON DCLIII.

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LOVE OF LIFE IN THE MIDDLE AGED.

"I said, O my God; take me not away in the midst of my days!" Psalm cii. 24.

MAN loves to live—dreads to die. The love of life is born with us. It is one of those instincts that serve, in the wisest manner, to display at once the wisdom and the goodness of the Creator. It comes into being at our birth, and never leaves us but with our breath. It animates the aged as well as the young, and glows in the bosom of the poor and wretched, as well as of the rich and joyous. It prompts to the exercise of our various faculties both of body and mind; sets the machinery of life at work, and keeps it in motion; nerves the arm of industry; urges on the innumerable enterprises of busy life; seeks out, from all the realms of nature, the various medical remedies by which disease may be removed from the system, or its progress checked; furnishes food, raiment, shelter, and the ten thousand comforts of civilized life; and puts far away, as much as the creature can, the hour of death and dissolution.

The prolongation of life is man's great business on earth. All ages, conditions, ranks, and races, toil to live. With a vast multitude it is the all engrossing thought. What shall we eat, and drink, and wear, and how shall we secure the necessaries of life, are the great questions of their being; the aim and end of all their thought and care and toil. We love to live, though in poverty, pain, and grief. No one loves to die. It is not natural to long

for death. It is only under the pressure of excruciating pain and heart rending grief, that the soul in its wretchedness cries out for death: and even then shrinks back from the near approach of the king of terrors. It is true of the Christian as well as of the infidel. "The grace of God, which bringeth salvation," does not extinguish the love of life, but quickens it rather. It makes the man alive to every duty—self-preservation, as well as self-renunciation. He who has received this grace has more to live for, and has more reason to cherish the love of life; inasmuch as life is now more purely a joy; is now enjoyed as never before; and inasmuch as he can now accomplish more by living. Death it is true, has no terror to him who abides under the shadow of the Almighty; it is robbed of its sting, and can no more injure him who has eternal life in possession. Yet it is not natural for the Christian, any more than for the unbeliever, to love to die. He may, and often does, have indescribable longings for the heavenly world; but still the love of life remains; it is not extinguished, but subdued, by the hope of a more exalted and glorious life beyond the grave. Nature still reigns within his breast, and points to the loved and fondly-cherished scenes and endearments of life, for which he is willing to bear the trials of this probationary period. To the saint as well as to the sinner life is dear.

While, however, the dread of dying and the love of living are natural to the aged as well as to the young, it is to those who are *in the midst of their days* that life is peculiarly dear. None so ardently desire life as they, and none so instinctively shrink from the approach of death. It is to the illustration of this theme that I now design to call your earnest attention.

The Intensity of the Love of Life in the Middle-aged.

No definite limitation of this class can be given. The term of human life is endlessly various. Age is not always to be determined by years. Some reach their maturity at an early period, and are as old at five-and-twenty as others are at thirty years of age. Others are as young at sixty as some are at fifty. The lines which separate this class from the young manhood of life on the one hand, and old age on the other, are, like the lines of light which divide the night from the day, so imperceptibly shaded, that none can tell where the one ends and the other begins. Ordinarily it is our custom to speak of men as middle-aged, who have exceeded their thirty years, and still come short of fifty. An earlier period introduces the other sex into the same class, and also into the ranks of the aged. A very large proportion of our hearers, it will be seen, are to be enumerated among the middle-aged. Let me hope for a patient, if not an earnest, hearing on a subject of great importance. What I wish to show is, that,

unwilling as mankind ordinarily are to leave the world and bid adieu to mortal life, none are so unwilling to die as those who are in the midst of their days; that with few exceptions the middle-aged are characterized by an intense love of life. This may be accounted for by the fact that they, more than others

I. *Have great confidence in the vitality of their physical frames.*

Confidence is of slow growth. When we enter upon our earthly career, our experience is of course very limited. We know not what we can do, bear, or suffer, until we are put to the trial. We are distrustful of success, fearful of failure, and liable to be discouraged by unexpected difficulties. But, as we progress in our plans and pursuits, as we obtain more enlarged views, and more accurate, too, of our own powers, and of the world without, we become less fearful, and more confident. We learn that we can expose ourselves with impunity to the constantly-recurring vicissitudes of climate, or that we can guard against them. Each successive experiment gives us increased confidence in the endurance of our physical systems, and every year finds us more courageous, more venturous.

The very dangers through which we pass serve to make us more confident. In early life we were subjected, in common with others, to the numerous epidemics and diseases of childhood; but, through the kind providence of God, we passed safely through them all. A large number of our coevals were cut off, but we were spared. To us, and to our fond friends, it was an evidence of the strength of our constitutions, perhaps; of the great vigor of our bodies, and of their peculiar powers of endurance. In later years, too, death has entered our neighbourhood in the form of malignant fevers, contagious disorders, and deadly pestilence, and cut off our neighbours and friends; but had no power over us. Others died, and we lived. The plague comes not nigh unto us, or, if it does, we survive its assaults. A thousand fall at our side, and ten thousand at our right hand, but we escape.

This very fact, therefore, that we have passed through so many dangers, and overcome so many assaults of disease, increases vastly our confidence in the vitality of our physical system. We learn to laugh at danger, whether from disaster or disease. We become bold and fearless. We journey from place to place, and no harm befals us. Others are killed, but we are unharmed. The soldier who survives the battle-field; the sailor who survives the loss of his ship and its crew; the traveller who survives the wreck of a train of cars; and all, in short, who have been exposed to great peril, without damage to their own life or limbs, are apt to be hardened against the ordinary dangers to which they are subjected, and to look upon themselves as the possessors of a

charmed life. Every successive escape does but render them less apprehensive, and more confident of life. We, who have looked into the graves of a whole generation, who have outlived our juniors as well as our seniors and coevals, have become habituated to death. While the young are easily alarmed, and deeply impressed at the sudden decease of an intimate or other friend; and while the aged tottering on the brink of the grave, lay the matter to heart, we, who are in the midst of our days, are often but slightly affected, and scarcely at all alarmed for ourselves. It is in accordance with the laws of our intellectual natures, to look with comparative indifference on familiar objects, especially of terror or of danger. Familiarity, in this respect, breeds contempt. The sailor soon accustoms himself to the reeling mast, and learns to glory in the storm and the tempest, that fills the timid landsman with indescribable terror. The soldier learns to exult in the martial array of contending armies, to shout at the sight of blood, and to riot in the flashes and thunders of the dogs of war. On the same principle, the middle-aged rise above the ordinary apprehensions of death, and learn to confide in their own vitality—their own prospect of long life and health.

Their love of life is further strengthened by reason of the very obvious fact that they

II. *Are most fully occupied with the concerns of the present life.*

They who are in the midst of their days are emphatically the business people of the world. Year by year they have added to their cares and occupations, until their whole time and thoughts are demanded by business. They have been constantly advancing too, in the knowledge of their own powers, and of the world without, and increasing in the vigor both of body and mind. They have arrived at an age when they are expected to enjoy the full development of their energies. Now, if ever, they must do something.

The young are comparatively free from care and anxious thought. Life to them is all a balmy morning of the early summer, Unfettered with the galling chains of busy toil and anxious care, they give themselves, with a buoyant spirit, to the pursuits of pleasure, scarcely heeding what shall be on the morrow. They are easily directed, and ready for any and every change; from one round of amusements or recreations to another; from play to work from work to play.

But, as we advance in years, we become more and more accustomed to business, care, perplexity, toil. We embark in various attractive enterprises; lay out numerous plans for pecuniary advancement; enter upon schemes of considerable magnitude, requiring great energy of mind, close and fixed attention, and the absorption of all our powers; occupy ourselves with fore-

casting our own lot and the lot of others also; assume burdens of no inconsiderable weight, and heavy responsibilities connected with public as well as private affairs; and scarcely know how to find a moment's leisure for domestic duties, or for the concerns of religion. As years increase, our knowledge also increases. We learn what we can accomplish. We gain confidence in our own powers. Every addition to our experience fits us the better to bear our part in the bustle and noise and stir of the busy world. A thousand avenues to wealth and fame are opened before us. We become sensible that, by intense application, we may rise to the enviable distinctions of social rank, and be numbered among the favoured children of fame and fortune. At least so we flatter ourselves. Our plans are laid. We set out to be rich; to be great; to be known, and read, and spoken of; to climb the ladder of ambition; to push our way through all difficulties, and over every obstacle; to distance all our competitors, and become the first in our callings, professions, and pursuits. However it may be abroad, it is so here. Whatever may be the state of the case in the obscure village, it certainly is the case in the opulent town, and in the swarming marts of trade. It is not for a day or two, a year or so, but for the long years of middle life, that we lay ourselves out. Our schemes are not bounded by any very distinct lines, but extend onward through the long vista of coming years, laying all our resources of mind and body under contribution. We expect to retire from these all-engrossing cares and occupations, only when the grasshopper shall become a burden and desire shall fail.

As we advance into the midst of our days, we advance also in influence—in moral power. We take the place of our seniors, and become the principal pillars of the domestic, social, commercial, and political state. The young look up to us as their leaders, counsellors, guides, and exemplars. They seek our patronage, value our opinions, and respect our example. We give the tone to the coming age. The aged also, as they withdraw from the scenes of busy life, and seek in retirement the repose so long denied them, and the preparation for another world so long deferred, look back to us, their juniors of the next generation, to carry forward to completion their unaccomplished plans and enterprises. Go through these thoroughfares; enter your market-places, stores, shops, and counting-rooms; mingle with the crowd in the in the exchange, along the wharves, or in the halls of legislation and justice; join the hurrying throng that fill our steamers and railway cars, as they fly on the wings of the wind from town to town, from state to state, from the river to the sea, from continent to continent, and tell me—who are they that compose these crowds, that give impulse to these quick-moving masses, that occupy the chief places in this wonderful panorama, so instinct with life? They are the middle-aged, the men and women of

mature years, of ripened thought, of fully-expanded powers. Mingled among them you will see, indeed, a more youthful class, hurrying on in the steps of their seniors; but they are only candidates for wealth and power. They are but in preparation for the posts of influence and emolument, now occupied by others. A few gray heads may also be seen at the council-board, at the chief places of concourse, and along the crowded street— the relicts of a passing generation. They who are in the midst of their days are the life and soul of the world—in the courts of princes, and presidents, and governors; in the halls of legislative strife, and debate, and deliberation; in the thousand walks of business; in the innumerable resorts of enterprise, ambition, and thrift.

How intense must be the love of life with which these busy multitudes are actuated. They have so much to do; there is so much devolved upon them by others; their schemes are so vast, so far reaching, and cover so much of future life, as to make them shrink with peculiar dread from the approach of death. They cannot think of it. They have no time to be sick even: they have no time to die. Death must not come nigh them. They surely must be excused. They have but just entered, or fairly set out upon the journey of life. They have but just got ready for life. All the past has been but a preparatory course. They have but just embarked upon an enterprise of great promise, and were never in a better condition to accomplish it. They have just purchased a farm, and begun to stock and improve it Give them time, and what a farm they will make of it! They have just started in a new branch of business; or moved into a new and advantageous location, and their prospects were never more flattering. Give them time,and they will make themselves known, and heard, and felt. They have just completed a contract for an elegant first-class house or store; or just finished the building, and are ready to occupy it. It has taken them all their life until now to get ready to live. They are just beginning to lay up for a wet day. Give them time, and see what a heap—what a pile they will scrape together. If ever there was a time when it was vastly inconvenient to die, it is just now. Their whole souls are bound up in their projects and pursuits, and they can think of nothing else. They must live. They cannot die just now.

Their love of life is also strengthened by

III. *The intenseness of their attachment to earthly objects.*

In early life we learn to love. But in that forming period, though we love with great ardor and delight, the objects of our attachment are more frequently changed, and more readily give place to others than in maturer years. The roots of affection

have not struck deep, nor entwined themselves with such numerous threads and bands and cords around the heart. As years increase, and the intellect expands, and the affections acquire strength, we learn to love with an intensity of passion and purpose unknown to our earlier years.

You may see an affecting illustration of this truth in the money-maker. By reason of the concentration of his thoughts, desires, endeavours, and toils upon this one thing, it becomes to him increasingly the greatest good of life. He learns to hold it with a firmer grasp—to part with it less readily and frequently; to contrive ways and means for securing what he has, and multiplying it. His passion for money becomes the ruling passion—the main-spring of action. His love for gold swallows up all other affections, and subsidizes all the other passions of the soul to this one pursuit—this one object of desire.

As we advance in years, we become more and more enamored with our favorite schemes and sources of pleasure. Our profession gets a stronger hold of us. We become fascinated, perchance, with some literary, or political, or commerial speculation. We find some hobby that has peculiar attractions for us, and we ride it always; and the more we ride it, the more we are delighted with it. All men have their hobbies, especially in middle life. Not that all men know it; but that such is the fact whether they know it or not. One sets about the discovery of the philosopher's stone, that shall turn everything that he touches to gold. Another means to square the circle; another to solve the problem of perpetual motion; another to find a way of travelling among the clouds; another to discover the sources of the Nile; another to bring to light a buried city of the antediluvian world; another to find out out some new uses of the great staples of commerce. All have their hobbies, with which, by the intensity of their attachment and devotion, they become at length completely identified. With the most, their business thus absorbs their affections. They become exceedingly enamored with it. They pursue it with eagerness, and devote to it their time, their strength, their reason, their souls. All the day long they are driving it, and all night dreamiug of it. They suppose at one time, that, when they had pursued it to a certain point, they would relinquish it and retire from it. But they knew not the utter impossibility of tearing their hearts away from its fondest love. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" It is more to them than the Ethiop's skin or the leopard's spots. It is their heart, their soul, their life. Tell me, ye busy merchants, ye whole-souled tradesmen! ye devotees of fame and wealth! who have reached the midst of your days, in the pursuit of your chosen profession—tell me, is it not as I have said? Had ye any conception at twenty of the strength and depth of that attachment which now binds you fast to this perishable world!

But it is thus also with other attachments. What at first was but a fancy ripens into regard, esteem, and love. Our counterparts, with whom we have pursued the journey of life, from early manhood; with whom we have encountered the rough and boisterous storm; with whom we have travelled through the dark and dreary vale of sorrow; with whom we have shared the joys and griefs of mortal life; to whom we have resorted for consolation and counsel; on whom we have leaned in feebleness; and to whose sympathizing care we owe so much of past enjoyment and present happiness; are not what they were to us in the bridal year. They have now become a part of ourselves—the soul of our soul—the life of our life. If ever it is so, surely it is more so as we approach the summit of our earthly career. The mere effusions of gallantry may have passed away; but they have given way to an abiding and an increasing strength of affection, with which youth has nothing to compare.

In most cases, too, of middle life, we have become the root of a beloved offspring—parents of young immortals, who bear our image and superscription, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. Every such pledge of conjugal love is an additional strand in the cord that binds us to life. In middle life the care of providing for them devolves upon ourselves. They have not yet reached the period of life when they can be left to their own guidance. They need our constant, vigilant, and faithful oversight. They must be educated as well as supported. They must be trained to act well their part in the drama of life. How can we tear ourselves from them—how leave them to the cruel mercies of an unfeeling world? It is like tearing the heart to tatters. As we look upon these objects of endearment, and think of the hour of separation, how instinctively we cry—"O my God! take me not away in the midst of my days!"

If we are not completely absorbed in our personal concerns, if we learn to look beyond the mere circle of our own kindred and dependents to the world without, and seek to make our influence felt for good, we learn to value life for its opportunities of benevolence. We become interested in some humane and charitable enterprise; some great work of reform; some particular association for the diffusion of knowledge, the relief of the wretched, and the spread of gospel truth. We devote to this object our learning, our thoughts, our time, our strength. It becomes thoroughly incorporated with our daily thoughts, and gives shape to all our projects and schemes of life. It becomes an adopted child, and we delight to labor and toil for its advancement. We long to live to carry forward a scheme, an enterprise, a charity of so much promise. Year by year, the prospect of usefulness opens wider and wider; new plans of doing good are discovered; and opportunities for carrying them into execution multiply. Life never was so loved as now. We greatly desire to live to

accomplish these plans, and we cry: "O my God! take me not away in the midst of my days!"

Much more is it the case with those of the middle-aged, who have given themselves to a life of sensual pleasure. What was entered upon at first as a mere diversion, becomes at length the business of life. It supplants every rival, drives out every intruder, and possesses the whole heart. The young know nothing of the whole-souled attachment with which the middle-aged, devote themselves to a life of pleasure; with which they pursue after the world, its pomps, its shows, and its fascinations. If they have come into the possession of fortune, they aim to be the leaders of the town, the arbiters of fashion, the first of their class, and second to none. The are they that shape the manners and the amusements of the day. They get up the greatest parties of the season. They make fashionable life what it is. They are the principal patrons of the play, the opera, the rout, the assembly. They bear sway at Newport and at Saratoga. Their will is law in the world of folly. Never before had they so many plans on foot—so many schemes of pleasure to execute; and never before have they been so wedded to life. The very thought of death is dreadful to these elegant dames, and their companions. It must not be named. They have no time to die. They must live.

It follows, as a consequence of all this, that the class, of whom I speak,

IV. *Are ordinarily less prepared for death than others.*

The fact of their being so much occupied with the cares and concerns of this mortal life, and the intensity also of their attachment to worldly objects, preclude that attention to their spiritual affairs, that is indispensable alike to the attainment of saving grace, and the growth of that grace when attained. They love life all the more, and shrink from the thought of dying, because they are so poorly prepared, or not at all, perhaps, for an event so momentous; and because they have so little leisure and inclination to make the needful preparation. Therefore they cry, with true sincerity and awful earnestness: "O my God! take me not away in the midst of my days!"

Such are some of the reasons that give intensity to the love of life in the middle-aged, and that makes them so dread the thought of its coming to a perpetual end.

But, whether we desire it or not, we must die. We are quite as likely to die as others. Death is no respecter of persons. He pauses not because of our reluctance to meet and accompany him. It matters not to him how much we are attached to life—how much we have to do, to endure, to love and desire. At the appointed time he makes his appearance, and claims us as his

own. The shafts of death have sped to many a man and woman among us of late who were yet but in the midst of their days. Some on the bed of disease; some on the shattered or burning steamer—the Henry Clay, the Reindeer, the Independence, and the Ocean Wave; some on the watery deep, by collision with other vessels, as the Atlantic, the Arctic, and others; some by dreadful disaster on the railway, as, but a few years since, near Lake Michigan, and at Norwalk Bridge; and others, by similar calamities from among the middle-aged, have gone the way of all the earth. We, too, must die.

Let me ask you, friends and neighbours! the solemn, all important question—Are you prepared to die? Many of you have no reply to make. You greatly fear that death will put a final end to your joys. You have no interest in Christ, no inheritance in heaven, and probably, in some cases, never will have. You have always been prone to neglect religion, and to put off the work of repentance; but never more than since you passed the season of youth. Your love of life, instead of diminishing, as perhaps you thought it would have done, has grown upon you year by year. Your unwillingness to die is more deeply-seated. You are more bound up in the world than ever—wrapped up in its business, projects, cares, perplexities, pomps, and pleasures. You are in the midst of your plans, and fully embarked in the turmoil of life. Your hands, your hearts, your souls are full. You have become deaf to the calls of God. You have learned the art of sitting among the hearers of the truth, and hearing scarcely a word. You have so long practised the art of warding off the arrows of truth, of silencing the admonitions of conscience, of turning a deaf ear to the warnings of divine Providence, and of quenching the Spirit, that you can now sit unmoved under the most awakening, alarming, and affecting appeals. The young tremble, are melted and subdued. But your mountain stands strong. You are in the midst of your days.

You have great confidence in the vitality of your physical powers—greater than you yourselves imagine. You never look upon yourselves as in reality exposed to death.

"All men think all men mortal but themselves;"

especially the middle-aged. You have so often gained the victory over death that you scarcely heed his approach. Our appeals are parcelled out to the aged and to the young; seldom to such as you. Nothing reaches you, nothing moves you. You have no time to read your Bible, to meditate on eternal realities, to hear God's word, except on the Sabbath. And even then, while in the sanctuary, your hearts are busied with the world. Having eyes you see not, and having ears you hear not. Thus it has been for years. You are becoming more and more insensible from year to year. If you have children, they are growing

up in an atmosphere from which are excluded the voice of divine praise and humble prayer; unblest with a parent's pious instructions and example; and preparing to run the same worldly and ungodly course of life. If you have wealth, or rank, or influence, they are all unsanctified. You have not learned the heavenly art of making "friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." And if you have a soul, as you surely have, how certainly are you preparing it for the world of everlasting despair!

Thou art in danger, friend! of being taken away in the midst of thy days, Look at that brow! it is furrowed with care—that aching head, it is sprinkled over with the early frost. Come with me and look into thy grave; it will soon be ready. Hark to that stealthy tread! It is the step of the grim messenger. No—it is not; that tread thou canst not hear. Lighter than the snow-flake is the footfall of Death. Thou shalt not know when he cometh. Already, perhaps, he is drying up thy life-blood, but thou knowest it not. He is stealing away thy life, and yet thou art dreaming of years, busy, joyous, and many, to be spent upon the earth in pleasure and in sin.

Fellow-travellers to the grave! be admonished. Awake to your danger before the summons comes. Is there no soft place in your heart? Must we see the cold sleep of death stealing upon you, and not be permitted, not be able, to arouse you? Our hope is in God alone. To him we lift our cry, and say—"O my God, take" them "not away in the midst of" their "days!"

A word to the young, before I close, is suggested by our theme. How impressively are you here taught that youth is the best time to seek the Lord! You, who are in the morning of your days, are prone to think that the "convenient season" is yet to come. How great, how fatal, your mistake! If by the convenient season you mean a period that shall be free from business, care, perplexity, and distress, you must not look for it in future life. You will not find it in middle life; you will probably never be old; and if you should, you will sigh for the days of your youth. Listen to the voice of experience—hear the exhortation of wisdom—Eccle. xii 1. Yes, remember your Creator now—now in the season of youth. Now is emphatically your time—the accepted time—the day of salvation. Young man! do you still doubt? Go, and ask that merchant with the furrowed brow; that tradesman with the heavy eye; that mechanic with his care-worn face. Make bold to question them; and say—"Sirs! would you advise me to secure the salvation of my soul now? or to wait till I attain to the midst of my days?" Young woman! go to that careful dame, that fond mother, that diligent housewife, who is just passing the meridian of her days, and has not yet found time to make her peace with God. Ask her, in all frankness and sincerity, the question—"Madam! what shall I do;

be a Christian now, or wait until, like you, I have passed the season of youth, and am approaching the winter of life?" And what will be the reply? Is there one of my coevals that will not join with me and say to each of these dear youth—"Seek first the kingdom of God?" "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth?"—Not one. Beloved youth! this is your day. Let it not be lost. Bow at your Saviour's feet: seek his grace and taste his love. Do it now.

"Be wise to-day; 'tis madness to defer;
Next day the fatal precedent will plead:
Thus on, till wisdom is pushed out of life."

HYMN.

Go watch and pray; thou canst not tell
How near thine hour may be;
Thou canst not know how soon the bell
May toll its notes for thee:
Death's countless snares beset thy way;
Frail child of dust, go watch and pray.

Fond youth, while free from blighting care,
Does thy firm pulse beat high?
Do hope's glad visions, bright and fair,
Dilate before thine eye?
Soon these must change, must pass away
Frail child of dust, go watch and pray.

Ambition, stop thy panting breath!
Pride, sink thy lifted eye!
Behold the caverns, dark with death,
Before you open lie:
The heavenly warning now obey;
Ye sons of pride, go watch and pray.

—*Spiritual Songs.*

SERMON DCLIV.

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KEEPING THE DOOR OF THE LIPS.

"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips."—PSALM cxli. 3.

IT is the conjecture of commentators that David wrote this Psalm whilst residing in Gath, whither, he had fled to escape the implacable enmity of Saul (1 *Sam.* xxvii). This is merely a conjecture, yet it harmonizes with the situation of David at that time. He was the guest of an idolatrous king, and was living among a people who had ever been the foes of Israel. His prayer in the text is, that he may be circumspect in his speech, so that he may not be guilty of sin in his words. Living among idolaters he prayed for grace to restrain him from saying any thing which might be construed into an apppoval of idolatry or a disapproval of the worship of Israel's God. Dwelling with the wicked, he prayed for grace to speak no words inconsistent with the character of one professing to be a friend and worshipper of the Lord, the only true God.

The figures of the "*watch*" or sentinel "to keep the *door* of his lips" are very expressive. The door is the place by which those within pass out, and those without pass in, and in a citadel or fortification, extreme care is necessary to allow no one to go out, or to come in, whose absence or presence may endanger the safety of the garrison. This is especially true when the citadel is surrounded with enemies. Accordingly, night and day, a sentinel stands on guard at the gate, and no one is allowed to come in or go out without showing that he has the right to do so.

The door of a private house is not thus guarded, yet serves to guard the privacy of domestic life from those who have no right there, and no one passes from the house without opening the door. The Psalmist compares his lips to a door, and prays that God will set a watch or sentinel so that no words may issue from that door, which it were better should never be spoken. This thought is one significant of practical reflections, always appropriate, and perhaps never more so than now.

I invite your prayerful attention to this striking petition, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips."

I. Let me ask you to consider *articulate words as constituting one of the most tremendous agents in the world.* I do not call it

tremendous because it is necessarily destructive, but in the same sense as the Psalmist says, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

Speech is a tremendous power because we usually employ it to express our thoughts. "Is there no one to rid me of this man!" exclaimed the furious Henry II., concerning Thomas a Becket. His thought expressed in these words started four men on the errand of murder, and in a few days, the haughty priest was weltering in his blood at the foot of his own altar. The awful campaign of Napoleon to Moscow, killing half a million of men, has been traced by historians, to the intemperate words of the Emperors Alexander and Napoleon.

What we see on this grand scale among men in power, is enacted constantly in the common walks of life. The majority of duels may be traced to articulate words, which conveyed the thoughts and feelings of the speaker to those about him. The single word "liar" or "villain" or scoundrel," or some such epithet, has kindled the person insulted into a fury, and many thousand lives have been sacrificed in consequence.

We have sufficient opportunities to know that even intoxicating liquors, usually do not produce brawls, and low street fights, until they have thrust aside decency, self-respect, conscience, the sentinel of the lips, and then from the door of the lips have issued opprobrious words, to breed fury in the soul.

A very large share of contentions in society come from words which ought not to have been spoken; and in looking at this fact we may realize how divine the wisdom of Christ's precept and example, "who being reviled, reviled not again."—1 *Pet.* ii. 23.

Articulate words are an agency of prodigious power and our Lord declares, "Whosoever shall say *Thou fool*, shall be in danger of hell fire," *Matt.* v. 22; no doubt including in the sin the apparent fact, that those two words uttered might show an enmity in the speaker and beget an enmity in the hearer capable of putting the souls of both speaker and hearer in danger of hell fire, or at least kindling a fire in both souls like that of hell.

Articulate words are an agency of prodigious power, "What say you, gentlemen of the jury, is the prisoner at the bar guilty or not guilty?" What fatal force is in the one word "Guilty!"

What inconceivably solemn issues hung on the few words, "Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom." And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, "To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise!"—*Luke* xxiii. 42, 43.

That brief prayer, made up of a few words, resulted in the salvation of a sinner just sinking into perdition.

Words are a powerful agency in the world, and Christ says that "every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." —*Matt.* xii. 36, 37.

Words are to be reckoned among the great motive powers of society, for "therewith bless we God and therewith curse we men."—*James* iii. 8.

"A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth; and a word spoken in season, how good it is!" *Prov.* xv. 23; even "like apples of gold in pictures of silver."—*Prov.* xxv. 11. In contrast with this, the wise man declares that "a continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike," *Prov.* xxvii. 15; and that "it is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop than with a brawling woman in a wide house," *Prov.* xxi. 9; a remark which is as applicable to a fretful passionate husband, as to a wife, and in *him* they are inexcusable. But this state of family wretchedness is usually brought about by *words.* Could some kind power so guard the lips as to suffer no unkind words to cone out, it would prevent more than half of the bitterness which distresses so many families; and well might each member of the family pray, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips."

Words are usually the very beginning of difficulties among neighbors, and it does not require a very hard word to start a quarrel or at least estrangement between friends. In almost every community, are persons, who, from thoughtlessness or wickedness, make it a business to keep society in a whirl. To do this requires only, that they should belong to a class called by the apostle "whisperers," *Rom.* i. 29; and by the wise man, "tale bearers," *Prov.* xviii. "A whisperer separateth chief friends;" "where no wood is, the fire goeth out; so where there is no tale bearer (a whisperer) the strife ceaseth."—*Prov.* xvi. 28; xxvi. 20.

I do protest to you that I am often astonished at the assiduous industry and ingenuity with which even very good people contrive to distress themselves and others, by nothing but *words.* It would seem as if whole hours were consumed in repeating idle words spoken by others, or in misrepresenting facts, or in dealing out words which gratify nothing but the enormous appetite which human nature has for mere "tittle tattle," idle, trifling, talk, which is not seldom slanderous in its nature. The coolness with which character is dissected and mangled, is quite shocking; and so generally in this sort of suffering diffused through society, that it would be as difficult to find one who had not lost a relative by death, as to find one who has not more than one scar on him to show that *words,* hot as fire, had burnt and tortured him.

Society in this respect is like a company of reckless fellows shooting poisoned arrows at random, and every archer, has had the poisoned barb driven into his own flesh.

Nor can we in this charge be looking at this one and the other one, and saying this is a wholesome thought for *him;* but we are all more or less guilty.

In looking over this illustration of the immense power of articulate words for good and for evil, and seeing what a tendency there is in human nature to use this power for evil, we may apprehend the meaning of these words, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man and able to bridle the whole body."—*James* iii. 2.

Having thus considered the tremendous power of articulate words, showing how appropriate is the prayer of the text, let us advance another step and mark.

II. *Some special times and circumstances when the prayer, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips," may be offered with special fitness and with the hope that good will come of it.*

1. One of these times is *when we are conscious of anger in our own bosoms.* "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce: and their wrath for it was cruel," said the dying Israel of his sons, Simeon and Levi, for deeds done in anger.—*Gen.* xlix. 7. "Anger resteth in the bosom of fools," says the wise man —*Eccles.* vii. 9.

Anger is in one sense a temporary insanity, when we look at things in a very different light from what we do when calm. Injuries of every kind look to an angry man to be of much greater importance than they really are. We are all aware of this fact, and who of us in anger has not said and done things for which we could give no excuse only that we *were angry!*

If this be so, then there is wisdom in the proverb as applied to words we may be tempted to use when angry, "The discretion of a man, deferreth his anger."—*Prov.* xix. 11.

Whenever we are angered by insult or injury, before we let out one "winged word" we ought to pray fervently, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips." I conceive it to be a dangerous business to speak words when anger is raging in the breast. In such a case silence and time are better, safer, happier than words.

2. *When those we address are angry, we have reason to pray, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth."*

There are occasions when one entirely calm, comes in contact with one who is angry, and who of course is likely to put a wrong construction on what is said to him. He is like one looking through a colored glass, which imparts its own colors to everything. The angry man hears words to which his excitement imparts a strange coloring.

If so, why risk words at all? or if you must speak, why utter any more than you are compelled to? The object of your speech is to convince, or explain, or conciliate, and you certainly have but a forlorn hope of doing what you wish, and run the risk of making matters worse.

Perhaps, silence is wisdom in such a case; but if you must speak, pray the Lord so to guard the door of your lips that only the soft answer that turneth away wrath may come forth. In such a temptation "the heart of the wise studieth to answer; but the mouth of the wicked poureth forth evil things."—*Prov.* xv. 28.

3. We have reason to utter this prayer *when speaking about persons against whom, and things against which, we know ourselves to have strong prejudices.*

Prejudice like anger is a sad medium through which to look at persons and things. When under its influence we are not unlike a jury packed to bring in a certain verdict without respect to law or evidence, and we inquire "can any good come out of Nazareth?"

But no part of our conduct is more likely to be affected by prejudice than our words. How hard it is to speak justly about those against whom we cherish prejudices! and how often do we see reason to regret words we have spoken under this influence!

This holds good in differences, concerning religious and political opinions and in all the works of social life. We are in danger of doing serious injustice in speaking under the influence of prejudice and in all such cases have special reason to pray, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips."

4. *When in the presence of those who, wilfully or through ignorance, are likely to misconstrue and wrongly report our words.* It is a safe rule and one which would prevent much trouble, never to say any thing about an absent person we should be unwilling to say in his presence. We often speak words about absent persons which we should have no hesitation in speaking before them, because conscious of no ill intentions, and yet some persons hear in such a strange way, and report with such ingenious perversions, that the friendliest words are converted into hostile speech and the kindest feelings into the malice of an enemy! Words reported by such can scarcely be recognized by the one who spoke them, so changed are they by emphasis and look, and in such entirely different circumstances are they placed.

This is done by some with bad intentions, and by others from mere thoughtlessness, but whatever the reason, the perversion rankles like poison, and produces mischief. There is perhaps not a day when some one does not observe this fact. Now if this be a fact, I can see a reason why in promiscuous society and even in the narrower circles of private friendship, each one should say with fervency, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips."

This is specially fit when speaking of the moral and religious qualities of others, since human nature is such that by its own instincts it relishes the sins of God's people as the leech does blood.

5. *When we have reason to fear that the innocent will be injured by our words.* What right has any one to discharge his

weapon at random when there is danger that he will maim or kill a human being? And in like manner what right has any one to utter words which may seriously injure the reputation of the innocent? Yet this is often done by having no sentinel to keep the door of the lips, and the prayer of the text is appropriate whenever we speak about those who may be wronged by what we say.

6. *Whenever we have reason to stand in doubt of our own motives in speaking.* Motives are what some persons are not accustomed to look at, but the day will come when the Searcher of hearts will examine into our motives whether we do or not. Sometimes the motive from which we speak is the wish to say something entertaining, and which will attract attention. This prevails much among what are known as "good story tellers," who are not apt to be very accurate in their narratives nor careful about their motives: except the one motive to entertain their hearers.

Sometimes the motive from which we speak is the wish to secure some personal end. This is the sin of politicians of every grade and hue, and is the very stuff out of which is woven many a public speech or written article on men and things. I grieve to add, that it enters largely and often into the discussions and differences between religious sects and denominations.

The same motive afflicts every grade and condition of society; and one must be quite blind if he can live in society a week without seeing the odious thing. Sometimes the motive is the comparatively innocent one of wanting to say something. It is easier to repeat what one has seen and heard than to engage in intelligent conversation on some profitable theme. The last requires thought, the former only memory. And yet the wish to say something which leads to much unprofitable conversation, is a very questionable motive, and, I much fear, will not be approved in the day of judgment.

Sometimes we speak to gratify some feeling of pique or prejudice, or anger, and of this motive of speech we need not stand in doubt a moment, for it is, without doubt, a motive of which we shall be ashamed, and the indulgence of which will cause us regret. Let these suffice as illustrations of the kinds of motives from which we may utter words. These motives, and similar ones, when acting on our minds and hearts, ought to lead good people to pray, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips."

7. To professing Christians let me say, *when in the presence of the wicked, silently offer this prayer to God:—"Set a watch, O Lord before my mouth: keep the door of my lips."*

In another Psalm (xxxix. 1) David says, "I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue:" "I will keep my mouth with a bridle (or muzzle) while the wicked is before me;" and

the Apostle Paul exhorts the Colossians to "walk in wisdom towards them that are without."—*Col.* iv. 5. If it be true that "in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin; but he that refraineth his lips is wise," *Prov.* x. 19, then he is specially wise who keeps a constant sentinel before his mouth in the presence of the wicked. Here is a place where inconsiderate speech may do injury lasting as eternity. The cause we love best, and the Saviour whom we adore, may be despised by the wicked on account of our words. The anxious may be turned away from Christ, and the careless be hardened into greater indifference. Our words may furnish food for jest and sneers with the unbelieving, and when we mingle with the world at large, this prayer should ever be on our lips—"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips."

III. Permit me to suggest *a few rules for keeping the door of the lips.*

Perhaps in many, or even the most of cases, there will be no need of rules; but there are some cases in which one well-settled principle may save a vast amount of trouble and mischief.

1. In a great many cases it will be useful, before speaking, to *ask yourself "What is the motive from which I am going to speak?"*

Perhaps the question, honestly answered, will show you that anger, or envy, or prejudice, is the motive; and need I say that when such a motive is at the bottom, we will do well to shut those words in as we would lock up a wild beast. Usually but little that is valuable will be lost; and a great deal will be gained by such prudence.

I am convinced that this suggestion is one which will do us all good if we will but practice it: and that there is not a day when this rule, rigidly enforced, would not save us many idle words, which are worse than idle in their effects.

2. In cases of excitement, enlisting your feelings deeply, or in cases of doubt, *ask yourself whether your words are likely, in the circumstances, to work mischief, or to wrong any one of whom you speak?* Often cases arise in which you are certain that one course is not wrong, but you are doubtful whether another course is right; and it is a safe rule to pursue the course concerning which there is no doubt. This rule applies to the keeping the door of the lips. The Apostle Paul announces this principle in relation to another subject; "He that doubteth is dammed if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."—*Rom.* xiv. 23.

In like manner the reluctance to wrong others is a great safeguard in the use of that tremendous agent which is called articulate language. We cannot maintain "a conscience void of offence," and speak recklessly words to the injury to others.

3. It is a safe rule often to *ask ourselves how our words will appear when we shall give an account thereof at the day of judgment.* "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned."—*Matt* xii. 36, 37.

In conclusion, permit me to remark that I have used words with as much plainness as possible, in describing and rebuking what has become, and is still, a growing evil, which has "set a man at variance with his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law,"—*Matt.* x. 34; an evil which is setting at defiance the ties of blood and the bonds of friendship! an evil which is fretting and worrying society itself into a feverish excitement, and defeating those influences which we might hope would be exerted by a preached gospel and the other means of grace.

Some, perhaps, are looking and longing for a revival of religion, of which there is an urgent necessity? but if I am not mistaken, before we are likely to have a revival, at least professing Christians must sincerely pray, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips." Some chronic ailments must be cured; Christians must love one another; must weep more than rejoice over one another's frailties; must come together as the heart of one man, with one aim, one love, one desire, and one prayer.

To do this we must "set a watch before our mouth, and keep the door of our lips." We need not fear that the topics of social conversation will fail under these stringent rules, for the high themes of redemption through Christ will yet be ours.

These rules will cut off nothing noble or valuable in our converse with others. The useless, the pernicious, the debasing only will be lost and the loss of these will be no lass.

The converse of Christ with his friends is the model for us to imitate; and Peter says of Christ, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."—1 *Peter* ii. 22. Blessed Saviour!

"Such was thy truth, and such thy zeal,
Such deference to thy Father's will,—
Such love and meekness so divine,
I would transcribe and make them mine,"

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SERMON DCLV.

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THE UNKNOWN DEPTHS OF DEPRAVITY.

"And Hazael said: But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria."—2 Kings viii. 13.

"Know thyself!" was the concise maxim of ancient wisdom, but like many others, it is a maxim more easily uttered than obeyed. The true knowledge of ourself is, indeed, the most difficult of all human attainments; it is in fact, altogether beyond the reach of human attainments. A man may know something of himself, even as he may know something of external nature, and of his fellow-men. But in both cases, there is a limit beyond which he cannot go; there are hidden depths which he cannot penetrate. Especially in regard to his moral character, man is to himself an "unknowable individual." There are latent tendencies in his own heart, which may remain wholly unsuspected, until revealed, by an unlooked-for combination of circumstances, which shall call them into activity. It is on this account that men are so apt to misjudge themselves, and so prone to regard as harsh and unjust, the Scriptural account of human depravity. They will consent that the strong language of the Bible, may be true of some monsters of iniquity, but that it is true of fallen and unregenerated human nature, as such; that it has any just application to themselves, they wholly deny. They even wax indignant, when we take the words of Christ, and of his Apostles, as the exposition of their own depravity and guilt. And when we trace out the

lines of their spiritual paternity, and exhibit the extravagance of their amazing folly, in the rejection of Christ, and assure them, that in themselves they have no security against a descent into the lowest depths of degradation and crime, they exclaim with Hazael, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" Now we would not needlessly disturb this self-complacency; we certainly would not do it, by any exaggerated representations of the inherent evil of the human heart. Nothing would be gained for the cause of truth and godliness, by painting the devil himself in darker colors than he wears, even if it were possible to do so. And yet it is the stale and standing charge against what is styled by ignorant witlings, a severe and sour Calvinism, that it delights to delineate human nature in the blackest lines, unrelieved by a single ray of love, or charity. But what could any system of doctrines possibly gain, except universal odium and detestation, by persisting in holding up such representations of human nature, if those representations were not true? It is not for the interest of any cause that would win the suffrages of men, to make them appear to themselves as worse than they really are. Satan sometimes plays a double game with sinners, and after having tempted them with flattering words, to great or long continued sin, he will turn and drive them to desperation, if he can, by persuading them that they are too bad to be forgiven. But by far his most frequent and successful effort is in the way of fostering the conviction, that they are too good to need forgiveness. The prevailing disposition of men is to think themselves better than they are. And as the faithful physician is often charged with unfeeling harshness, when urging the use of vigorous remedies, or even the amputating knife; he reveals the imminent danger of his patient; so, and with as little reason or justice, the faithful preacher of the word, is accused of delighting in denunciations, and exaggerating the moral malady of the soul, when he exhibits, from the word of God, its deep and damning depravity. If he had no remedy to propose, his representations, though truthful, might be regarded as needless, and his zeal, as wanton cruelty. But whilst, blessed be God! there is a remedy, yet such is man's inveterate aversion to it, that only the extremest sense of his need will bring him to consider and embrace that remedy. "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick," and as to an application of the remedy, it is all the same, whether a man is really whole, or only imagines himself to be so.

It is therefore of the first importance, that every man should at least so far know himself, as to be sensible of his own guilt and danger. Without this, it is in vain that we speak of the remedy, for without this, there will be no application to the great physician of souls. It is not, then, in unkindness, but in love, that we lift the covering from that abyss of sin, the human heart; it is not in cynical bitterness, but in sorrow, that we point to its

festering corruption; it is not with curious, but with weeping eyes, that we explore its secret chambers, and bring to light its hidden vileness. May the Spirit of all grace, guide our thoughts, and succeed our effort, as we endeavour this day to exhibit one phase of depravity, as illustrated in that fragment of sacred story which we have selected for our text.

Hazael was prime minister to Benhadad, King of Syria, and his eventual accession to the throne of that kingdom had been made known to Elisha, to whom God had revealed his purpose of punishing the sins of Israel by his instrumentality. When in after years Elisha, came to Damascus, Hazael was sent by his master, who was then ill, to consult the prophet respecting his recovery. The answer was, that the king might certainly recover. "Howbeit," added the prophet, "the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die?" Then fixing his eye steadily upon Hazael, as if he would read his secret thoughts, the guilty officer of the king became confused, and betrayed his embarrassment, whereupon the man of God *wept;* and when Hazael had inquired the cause of this outburst of tears, Elisha replied, by describing the vivid picture then present to his own mind, of all the evils which the man now before him would inflict upon Israel. At this portrait of himself, Hazael exclaimed, "But what! Is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?" The Prophet condescended to no further explanation than simply intimating, that, as king of Syria, he should do it. Hazael delivered to his master that part of the prophetic response which was intended for him; but the very next day, this man, cool and calculating in his ambition, took a thick cloth, and having dipped it in water, spread it over the face of the king, who in his feebleness, or in his sleep, was smothered by its weight, and died, what seemed to his people, a natural death. Having thus reached the throne, through the guilt of murder, Hazael made war upon Israel, and in a series of campaigns and victories, extending through forty years, he made good to the very letter, the appalling predictions of Elisha.

In considering the facts of this brief history, there are three points worthy of attention:—

I. Hazael knew that he was a wicked man, and that his tendencies were wicked. It is not improbable that his ambition had already suggested and entertained the purpose of the foul murder of Benhadad, which he afterwards committed. Perhaps, this thought was in his mind when the Prophet told him that the king's malady was not mortal, but that he should nevertheless die. If so, it was the consciousness of his bloody purpose that made him quail under the searching glance of Elisha. He supposed himself in the presence of one who could read his thoughts, and with such thoughts in his heart, no wonder that he was confused. Those significant words, "*the Lord hath showed me that he shall*

surely die," and that steadfast gaze, penetrating to his inmost heart, would seem to him as the articulate utterance of his crime.

II. But though consciously guilty, Hazael did not know how wicked he was, and to what lengths of crime the evil tendencies would carry him. It was not a hypocritical affectation of horror when he replied to the prophet's prediction, "But what! Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" We believe that Hazael was really shocked at the contemplation of the crimes which the Prophet described. He could not conceive himself as guilty of such enormities, and he actually felt a glow of indignation at the supposition that he could possibly be capable of them. Nor is it difficult to reconcile this with the supposition that he was already meditating the murder of the king. That crime had grown familiar to his conscience. He had looked it in the face, under the influence of a dominant passion. His strong desire for the end to be obtained by it, had led him to consider all imaginable extenuations of its guilt. Banhadad was growing old and infirm. The vigor of his reign was past, and the kingdom needed a more active and energetic government. Though he should recover from this sickness, yet he could last but a few years at best. But then, in those few years, events might occur, which would put Hazael out of the succession. He might lose the favor of the king, or the favor of the people, and thus the golden prize which tempted his ambition might be lost to him forever. Was it not better, by a bold stroke, which might be given without detection, to grasp the crown, and actually benefit his country, by employing his superior talents in its government? By such sophistries as these his mind might have been brought to look upon this awful crime without shuddering, and though he quailed under the eye of the Prophet, when he supposed his secret purpose was known to him, yet it was the fear of discovery that discomposed him, rather than the guilt of his meditated crime. No doubt he felt relieved when Elisha did not mention the murder of the king, as among the causes of his tears. And no doubt he recoiled with unaffected horror, when he did mention those other enormities which he would perpetrate. He had succeeded in stupefying his conscience in regard to the first, but he had never yet contemplated or been in a situation to look without aversion, upon the cruel and needless butchery of helpless women, and innocent children. Those were crimes not yet grown familiar to his thoughts, and from which his conscience, though blood-stained already, yet shrank with instinctive horror.

III. But we notice, thirdly, that though honest in his recoil from the predicted atrocities, yet, as the event proved, he was capable of doing all, and more than all, that the prophet had said. The latent evil was in his heart, though as yet undeveloped in

this precise form and degree. It needed only the fitting circumstances of power, passion, and opportunity to make him, in fact, the "*dog*," the ravenous beast of prey, which he supposed Elisha's prediction to imply. The devil was in possession, and though he had not yet turned out every lingering remainder of conscience and sensibility, yet he had it all in subjection and could afford to take his time in bringing his deluded victim to the last degree of degradation and crime. The man had no power in himself to withstand the arts of that evil spirit who was leading him captive at his will. He was already the willing victim of the adversary, and it was a part of the infernal artifice of the destroyer to make him believe that, though up to a given point he had yielded, yet as to the rest he was free and need no further go. The deceitfulness of sin had so blinded his mind that he did not discover the truth, so constantly overlooked in the calculations of sinners, that in yielding one point all was yielded; that the heart owns no divided allegiance, but God or the devil must be enthroned in its supremacy. But let me not be misunderstood upon this point. I do not say that no evil passion or feeling will intrude into the heart where God reigns, nor yet that all amiable sensibility is destroyed and every generous impulse is excluded from the heart in which the devil is enthroned. The dominion of God in the regenerated soul, though at once supreme, yet is not at once complete. There may be lurking rebels in a conquered country, and though but one supreme authority is acknowledged, yet it may not be perfectly obeyed. In the renewal of the soul the dominion of sin is broken, but the extirpation of sinful habits requires sanctifying grace. And where the power of Satan is dominant in the soul, it does not imply that a man is in all respects a devil, or that he is in every thought and feeling as bad as he might be. But this, at least, is true, and this is what we would affirm, that where the devil has possession he is supreme, and that when the heart is yielded to his dominion there is no assignable limit beyond which he may not carry the victim of his power in the career of sin and crime; and more than this, that the wilful, deliberate, and habitual rejection of God's authority, in any point, is itself a yielding up of the soul to the authority of the devil in every point. The rejection of God is subjection to the devil, and where the heart is under his dominion no sinner can know or fix the boundary of guilt beyond which he may not be carried.

Hazael found it so, and though he only intended to reach the throne by one act of murder, yet no sooner had he reached it than he dyed it crimson in the blood of the helpless. Restraints removed, opportunities offering, and passions inflamed, he became the "*dog*" he had indignantly designated the man who could do such things.

But it is not my purpose to detail the enormities perpetrated

by Hazael or to dwell upon his character further than as an illustration of those facts in human depravity which it reveals, and which were not peculiar to him, but which are common to all men in their natural condition. Hazael grasped a crown by the foulest murder, and mounted to the throne over the slain body of his master, to wield the bloody sceptre of a vindictive and merciless tyrant. And, perhaps, you are ready to say, "What have we in common with such a man? How can his character illustrate our own?" As to his deeds you have nothing in common, and as to the prominent points of his character you have nothing. I am not preaching to blood-stained murderers, or exterminating tyrants. But there is an important point, because it is the radical point in which his character and yours unite, and do actually become one. You look upon the man and his deeds and you find in your hearts no sympathy with his crimes, but with instinctive aversion you brand him, in his own epithet, "a dog?" But I would have you look beyond his deeds to the source and spring of all his crimes, and then say, if you find no corresponding *fountain of iniquity* within your own breast. As yet it may have poured forth no such dark or crimson tides of guilt, perhaps it never will in this world. And, perhaps, those swelling floods are withheld *only* because you are *not* the eventual successor to Syria's throne, and because you are *not* Syria's king, in those days when Damascus was the pride of Syria and Syria the mightiest empire in the East. Say not in your indignation "Is thy servant a dog that he should do these things!" lest in so saying you only help to complete the resemblance and point the moral which we seek to enforce.

Let us look at the facts:

1. Hazael knew, when he uttered these words, that he was a wicked man, and that his tendencies were wicked. So do you, and so does every unrenewed man know the same. You may have no meditated murder upon your conscience or any other deed of darkness to make you quail under the eye of a fellow man. But you have the guilt of long continued and daring sin upon your conscience, and *there is* an eye before which you shrink abashed, and *there is* an accuser, sometimes sterner than the Hebrew prophet, whom you cannot confront. By familiarity with sin, it may have grown comparatively easy, and a stupefied conscience may give you little trouble, except an occasional twinge. But you know that you cannot stand before God in judgment and answer for one in a thousand of your sins, and the thought of that dread tribunal will, now and then, stimulate conscience to an unwonted activity and alarm your guilty fears. Your refuge, then, is in escaping reflection, or in soothing your apprehensions by extenuating your sins and magnifying your merits. You plead the infirmities of the flesh and the little harm you have

done; you are not as bad as others; you have maintained your integrity as a man, at least, you are *no hypocrite* and exemption from that crime you hold as a high merit, if not as an actual indemnity for all your sins. But with it all you cannot escape the conviction that you are wicked, and your tendencies are wicked; you have not rendered unto God the things which are God's; you have trampled upon his authority; you have broken his laws and though sometimes troubled, you are not penitent for your sins, but persist in their practice. Sinner, is it not so? Well, then, the first point is made out, and as we are not inquiring for the measure and degree of actual trangression but for the source and nature of sin, you must confess that you have this much in common with Hazael, namely, a wicked and depraved heart. But this is a main point, for if your conduct flows forth from the same polluted fountain, it implies a correspondence of character, though the streams of iniquity may not in both cases have proceeded to the same extent of evil.

2. But again, Hazael was a much worse man than he supposed himself to be, and capable of committing crimes at the prospect of which he shuddered. And so are you, and so are all unregenerated men far more wicked than they suppose, and capable of an excess of sin from which, under other circumstances, they would shrink with horror. The truth upon this subject is, no man knows himself until he is tried, every man finds himself more susceptible to the power of temptation than he had supposed, and any man unrestrained by the power of divine grace, has no security that he shall not be carried away to the last extreme of vice and crime. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?" "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." There are mournful and startling examples upon record, of grievous sins into which good men have fallen, and which stand as beacon-lights along the pathway of life, to warn away from temptation even the Christian who is unduly confident in himself. The penitential strains of Israel's bard have been fitly sung by many a saint recovered from his sins, and by it taught, as David was, to know his own weakness. But in the heart, unrewed by divine grace, there are tendencies to evil which no man can limit or confine, by any boundaries which he himself shall erect. The barriers of education or the restraints of society may suffice, under favorable circumstances, but they will be swept away when temptation, opportunity, and passion combine to open the floodgates of iniquity and pour out the gathered, but hidden wickedness of the heart. There was a time when even a Nero could exhibit some marks of sensibility, but the man who once wept at the execution of a felon, coolly plotted and executed the murder of his own mother, and revelled in fiendish delight in the destruction of his own capital, and the unprovoked slaughter of hun-

dreds and thousands of its citizens. The point I desire to impress is simply this, there is no assignable limit to the wickedness to which any man may be carried in whose heart the devil has possession. He may yet coolly perpetrate crimes at the suggestion of which he would now be indignant, and cry out with Hazael, "Is thy servant a dog?" But let him become king of Syria, in other words, let his present circumstances be changed, and power and opportunity concur, and he has no security that the indwelling devil will not be displayed in all the diabolical excesses of an incarnate fiend.

3. And intimate connection with this is that other fact, that every heart in which God does not reign is under the dominion of the devil. He may not, as yet, have exterminated all its sensibilities. The sinner may never, in this world, become altogether a devil, but the latent evil is there, and it only waits its development to make him all that his inexorable master would have him to be.

SERMON DCLVI.

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CHRISTIAN MEEKNESS HONOURABLE.

"The discretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression."—PROVERBS xix. 11.

VERY diverse are the ideas which different men have conceived of honor; and various, accordingly, are the standards which have been adopted for the measurement of honorable conduct. The time has been when he who was most successful in pommelling the body of his fellow, or in inflicting the speediest and deadliest revenge for real or supposed injuries, was the applauded of surrounding thousands and the honoured of a nation. The time is even yet when the conquering chieftain who has steeped the battle-field in the blood of his enemies, and who has rolled the widest and deepest wave of ruin over states and nations, returns to receive from enthusiastic millions his crown of glory,

Amid the various and, for the most part, degrading conceptions of the glory of man which have generally prevailed, the exalted morality of the text is most advantageously seen. Unregenerate men in their best estate have too often regarded revenge as

the mark of a noble spirit, and he who could brook insult and injury without attempting to call down vengeance upon the head of his enemy, has been esteemed ignoble, mean, and weak-minded. But how opposite the sentiment of the text—"It is the GLORY of a man to pass over a transgression!" That which impulsive man has reckoned a decisive mark of pusillanimity is thus avowed to be his highest and truest glory. And my object shall be, in a few words, to show that it is so.

It is in obedience to the highest dictates and noblest sentiments of the human soul. Humanity presents us with a strange compound of the animal and the spiritual; of passion, and propensity, and appetite on the one hand, and reason and conscience on the other. Which of these two classes of principles was designed to be supreme, and which subordinate, is evident as well from reason as from revelation; and which, as a matter of fact, has been subordinate, and which supreme, the history of man too sadly and clearly teaches. The fall of man has reversed the order which God establishes. Passion and animality have been exalted to the throne, and reason and spirituality have been stripped of the sceptre: and trampled in the dust. The dictate of passion is self-gratification; and that dictate is the law for unregenerate man—called in the Scriptures the law of the flesh. The dictates of the intelligence or of reason are in accordance with the teachings of the Spirit of the Almighty; and hence are spoken of by the Apostle as the law of the Spirt. When man exalts to the throne the mere animal propensities, he brutifies his soul, and infinitely degrades the lofty powers with which his Maker has endowed him. When he places the reins of government in the hands of conscience, and makes the soul pre-eminent over the body, he realizes the end for which God designed him. In breathing the spirit of revenge he does the former; in exercising meekness and forgiveness he does the latter. Then it is that he appears as man, and not as a beast. Then it is that he stands up in the dignity of his moral and spiritual nature, "a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honor." It is thus that he is shown to be possessed of true nobility by Heaven's own patent. Then does he most magnify his office as lord of creation, when it is seen that he can govern himself. Every passion is humbled into submission, and bows respectfully to the authority of that inner law which the finger of God has written upon the soul. When the cries of revenge for the blood of an enemy are hushed into silence, and the raging storm of the baser passions is quelled at the voice of command, then is seen the majesty of the divine in man. The spirit of retaliation springs indigenous in the human heart. No disposition is more strongly marked, or more universally prevalent. It is seen from the first opening development of the animal being, and, unextinguished by influences from above, it burns on till

death. Constant indulgence gives it strength. And when we see the man who displays such power of self-control and such a nobleness of spirit as are demanded to quell the risings of turbulent passion, and to conquer the power of inveterate habit, we mark it as a notable instance of self-government, and a memorable triumph of the spiritual over the animal nature. And as the soul is nobler than the body, and an angel more glorious than a beast, so is meekness nobler than revenge.

We cannot but admire and honor this noblity of spirit wherever exhibited; and this is itself a proof of the doctrine of the text. A meek and forgiving spirit is consonant with the noblest sentiments that ever found a home in the bosom of man, and cannot fail to awaken the highest respect. It is said of the renowned Henderson, that the oldest of his friends never beheld him otherwise than calm and collected; it was a state of mind he retained in all circumstances. During his residence at Oxford, a student of a neighbouring college, proud of his logical acquirements, was solicitous of a private disputation with the distinguished Henderson. Some mutual friends introduced him, and having chosen his subject; they conversed for some time with equal candor and moderation; but Henderson's antagonist perceiving his confutation inevitable, forgetting the character of a gentleman, and with a resentment engendered by his former arrogance, threw a glass full of wine in his face. Henderson, without altering his features, or changing his position, gently wiped his face, and then coolly replied, "*This, sir, is a digression; now for the argument!*" "All that is great and good in the universe is on the side of clemency and mercy." If we look into the history of mankind we shall find that in every age those who have been most respected *as truly worthy*, have been distinguished for this virtue. Revenge dwells in little minds; a noble and magnanimous spirit is superior to it. It has been beautifully said that "the greatest man on earth can no sooner commit an injury, than a good man may make himself greater by forgiving it."

Philip of Macedon was a king and a warrior. Such was the path of honor in his day. But his acts of moderation, when sometimes addressed in injurious and insulting language, were the most truly kingly of any that gave lustre to his reign. At the close of an audience which he gave to some Athenian ambassadors, who were come to complain of some act of hostility, he asked whether he could do them any service. "The greatest service thou couldst do us," said Demochares, "would be to hang thyself." Although the persons present were all of them highly offended at these words, Philip, with the utmost calmness of temper, made the following answer: Go tell your superiors that those who dare make use of such insolent language are more haughty and less peaceably inclined than those who can forgive it." And we

cannot forbear thinking, that if his son Alexander had displayed more of this clemency, he would have been far more deserving than he was of the appellation he bore.

But the sacred Scriptures furnish us more notable illustrations of this greatness of soul. The conduct of David in his treatment of Saul is a striking one. David had been anointed king, and well understood that he was to be the successor of Saul. He was exceedingly popular with the nation at large, and might with perfect impunity have taken the life of his enemy. Saul thirsted for his blood, and pursued him with deadly vengeance. David and his men were in a cave among the rocks of the wild goats in the wilderness of Engedi. Thither Saul with his three thousand men pursued after him. Unsuspicious of any immediate danger, the king turned aside into the very cave where David and his men were concealed. "And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do unto him as it shall seem good unto thee." Now observe the temptation. David anointed king, and destined to occupy the throne as soon as Saul was out of the way. Saul seeking his life. Himself sustained by the people. His enemy perfectly in his power. And his men using their best endeavours to induce him to put an end to his severe calamities of which Saul had been the sole author, *and quoting in support of their advice the word of the Lord!* Was ever such a cluster of temptations so nobly resisted, save in the history of the Son of David, the Saviour of the world? David merely drew near and cut off a part of Saul's robe that he might give him a convincing proof of his own innocence. And even for this his tender conscience seemed afterwards to smite him. "And when Saul rose up out of the cave, David also rose up after him, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My Lord, the King! And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself. And David said unto Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold this day thine eyes have seen how that the Lord hath delivered thee to-day into mine hands in the cave; and some bade me kill thee; but mine eyes spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth my hand against my lord; for he is the Lord's anointed! Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand; for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not; know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it." Such is the boldness with which conscious innocence and virtue inspire their possessor. Scarcely could we find in the history of this king or any other a grander illustration than this of a truly heroic and magnanimous spirit, "Surely the discretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to

pass over a trangression." And we are not surprised that even Saul's stern heart was deeply moved by such an exhibition of magnanimity and clemency; and that, "when David had made an end of speaking these words unto him, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David; And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil." Strange that so soon after this there should have been occasion for another manifestation on the part of David of the same noble spirit. But so it was. Saul and his three thousand pursued him again. He was by a deep sleep thrown into the power of David. And Abishai asked only that he should be allowed to smite him once, with the promise that he would not smite him again. But no. "David said to Abishai, Destroy him not. As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed." Repeated and malicious persecutions could not embitter his heart, nor stir him up to vindictive measures. Noble man! A king indeed! "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

The prayer of the dying Stephen is a sublime illustration of the highest glory to which man may attain. "Lay not this sin to their charge," is a prayer for one's murderers which never could have proceeded but from a heart beating full in sympathy with him who on the cross of Calvary lifted his dying cry—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It could only be the prayer of him who not *once* merely saw the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God, but who had daily intercourse with the unseen world, who lived as seeing him who is invisible, and like Enoch walked with God. And this is the true secret of such meekness of spirit, and such self-subjection as our subject contemplates. It is the realization of the Divine existence, and an unwavering confidence in the integrity of the Divine character and of the Divine government, that can allay effectually the spirit of revenge, and leave to the King of kings and the Judge of all the vindication of our rights, and the redress of our wrongs. Hence even Michael when contending with the devil, did not bring a railing accusation against him, but only said, "The Lord rebuke thee." And hence the fitness of the inspired exhortation, "Beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him: if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good."

And yet we are not to understand that the Divine mind, in the

administration of law, exercises a vindictive spirit, or retaliates even upon the humblest of his creatures, the wrongs they have done. Far, far from it. On the contrary, the character and conduct of God furnish us with infinitely the highest illustration of the doctrine of the text, and the mightiest motive to embody it in our lives. Mercy is Jehovah's darling attribute; judgment is his strange work; and never at all is it entered upon, except upon the demand of infinite benevolence itself, and in no case from the impulses of revenge. And what is the glory of the Creator, may surely be esteemed the highest honor of the creature. The noblest impulses and the highest conceptions of the human mind; the greatness of the greatest of earth, the greatness of angel and archangel, are on the side of meekness and clemency. But all these vanish into infinite littleness when contrasted with the greatness of him who is the Maker of them all. We often place before us the example of the good and the great, that by contemplation, our characters may become assimilated to theirs. We think it an honor to be like such: how much more to be like God. The best advice which the heathen stoic philosopher Epictetus could give to his pupils was this: "Propose to yourself the example of wise and good men, whether alive or dead; and compare your conduct with theirs. When you are going to confer with any one, represent to yourself how Socrates or Zeno would behave in such a case, and you will not be at a loss to make a proper use of whatever may occur." But with the light of divine revelation shining upon us, we discern another and a higher way cast up for us, and the voice from Heaven speaks to us—"Be ye followers of God."

And here we discover the footsteps of Him who was "God manifest in the flesh," and who, "when he was reviled, reviled not again." We are taught not merely by precept, but by example, that the wisdom which is from above, is full of mercy. We behold Immanuel, amid the death-groans of Calvary, crying in his agony, while the rocks were rent around him, and heaven and earth were bearing witness to his Divinity, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Here was displayed the transcendent glory of the Godhead! Surely it is the glory of A MAN to pass over a transgression. A gentleman once went to Sir Eardly Wilmot, Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, exceedingly angry and indignant in view of an injury which he had received from a person high in the political world, and which he was meditating how to resent in the most effectual manner. After relating the particulars, he asked the Chief Justice if he did not think it would be manly to resent it. "Yes," said the knight, "it will be *man-like* to resent it: but it will be *God-like* to forgive it." The gentleman declared that this had such an instantaneous effect upon him, that he came away a different man and in a very different temper from that in which he

went. And I have only to add to this beautiful remark, that that only which is God-like is in the truest and highest sense *manly*.

But enough, perhaps, thus far, for the illustration of the doctrine of the text: and your attention is invited to a few thoughts suggested by it.

1. *We see how strong and convincing is the internal evidence of the Bible.* The very nature of its doctrines proves them to be from Heaven. Such a sentiment as that of my text never fell from the lips of any philosopher or moralist unacquainted wth the sacred Scriptures. A sceptical lawyer, of considerable eminence, in New England, was some years since induced by a friend of his to commence the examination of the truth of the Christian Religion.* After concluding, lawyer-like, to enter upon the investigation of the subject, he inquired of a pious acquaintance of his who was also a lawyer—"What books, sir, would you advise me to read on the evidences of Christianity?" "The Bible," said the other. "I believe you do not understand me," said the sceptic; "I wish to investigate the *truth* of the Bible." "I would advise you, sir," repeated his Christian friend, "to read the Bible, and," continued he, "I will give you my reasons. Most infidels are very ignorant of the Scriptures. Now, to reason on any subject with correctness, we must understand what it is about which we reason. And in the next place, I consider the internal evidence of the Scriptures stronger than the external." "And where shall I begin," inquired the unbeliever, "at the New Testament?" "No," said the other, "at the beginning—at Genesis." The infidel accordingly began; liked many things and some he disliked. After he had read as far as through the 20th chapter of Exodus, the Christian lawyer called upon him one evening, and found him at home walking his room, with a dejected look, his mind apparently absorbed in thought. He continued, not noticing that any one had come in, to trace and retrace his steps. His friend at length spoke:—"You seem, sir, to be in a brown study. Of what are you thinking?" "I have been reading," replied the infidel, "THE MORAL LAW." "Well, what do you think of it?" asked his friend "I will tell you what I *used* to think," answered the infidel. "I supposed that Moses was the leader of a horde of banditti; that, having a strong mind, he acquired great influence over a superstitious people; and that on Mount Sinai he played off some sort of fire works, to the amazement of his ignorant followers, who imagined, in their mingled fear and superstition, that the exhibition was supernatural." "But what do you think now?" interposed his friend. "I have been looking," said the infidel "into the nature of that law. I have been trying to see whether I can add any thing to it, or take any thing from it, so as to make it

* Tracts of the American Tract Society, No. 321.

better. Sir, I cannot. It is *perfect.*" He then proceeded to enumerate the ten Commandments, showing their appropriateness, and analyzing with legal acuteness, the nature of each and the classification of the whole, and proceeded :—"I have been thinking of this question, WHERE DID MOSES GET THAT LAW ?" I have read history : the Egyptians, and the adjacent nations were idolaters ; so were the Greeks and Romans ; and the wisest and best Greeks and Romans never gave a code of morals like this. *Where did Moses get this law,* which surpasses the wisdom and philosophy of the most enlightened ages ? He lived at a period comparatively barbarous ; but he has given a law in which the learning and sagacity of all subsequent time can detect no flaw. Where did he get it ? He could not have soared so far above his age as to have devised it himself. I am satisfied where he obtained it. It must have come from Heaven. I am convinced of the truth of the religion of the Bible." The infidel—an infidel no longer —remained to his death a firm believer in the truth of Christianity. And a thousand things which are found in this book of books infinitely transcend in the grandeur of their morality, the noblest sentiments that were ever incorporated in heathen systems of law, philosophy, or ethics. Revenge was generally regarded as the mark of a noble spirit, and inculcated in their systems of morals. Where, then, did Solomon, who lived before the time of Plato, or Socrates, Zeno, or Aristotle, Crysippus, or Epictetus, Cicero, or Seneca, and in a more uncivilized and barbarous age, (but for the influence of the Old Testament Scripture,) where did he get that exalted God-like morality, that sets it forth as "the glory of a man to pass over a trangression ?" Before the infidel can have answered such a question he will be compelled to renounce his infidelity and embrace the Bible.

2. *We see also the absurdity of that theology that extols the New Testament but discards the Old.* Error is always blind, and frequently most grossly absurd and inconsistent. Of which fact a better illustration could not be found than that before us. The Old Testament not inspired ? Then was the eminent lawyer referred to, deluded after all. For he had only proceeded through its first pages, when he was convinced of its divine origin. And surely he could not have proceeded farther than to the words selected for the text, before incredulity itself would have yielded. We have heard a man who could enlarge eloquently upon the glorious doctrines of the New Testament, and especially that of forgiveness, and yet in the same sentences pour out his anathemas upon the Old Testament Scriptures, hurling them from their place in the book of God to dwell with the Koran or the Hindoo Shasters. Did he forget that there is not on any page of the Bible a more beautiful and sublime expression of that very doctrine than the one contained in the text? "It is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression." There is nowhere to be found a more ex-

alted morality than that contained in the Old Testament; nor is there a single duty to God or man contained in the New Testament, which is not found in the Old. God has not grown more holy or benevolent since the days of Moses or Solomon. And be it remembered that every commendation of the Scriptures uttered by Christ, or the Apostles, must have referred primarily to the Old Testament, as the New was not then in existence.

3. *How different are the ideas of many worldly men in respect to honour from those inculcated in the text.* They think it honourable to deal out vengeance upon the head of him who insults or injures them, and, cowardly to pass it over;—glorious to retaliate—inglorious to forgive. But far different are the teachings of Solomon, and of the Spirit of the Almighty, that gave him understanding. "The things which are highly esteemed among men are abomination in the sight of God." Heaven's views of honour not often tally with those of earth. Whose sympathy and approval, then, shall we prefer—God's, or men's? Shall we rank ourselves in associations with the baser passions, or the nobler faculties of the human soul? Shall we aspire to receive the appellation of honourable and spirited which vindictive and selfish men may bestow, or shall we seek alliance with the Almighty, and with the lofty-minded spirits that encircle his throne?

4. *Men often greatly mistake in supposing that revengeful and malignant passions really commend them even to their fellows.* The soul has been enslaved to the body; and reason and conscience subjected to the dominion of passion and lust; yet they submit *with a protest.* Conscious of their enslavement, and convicted of their degradation, they are compelled to pay homage, however reluctant it may be, to that character in which the soul maintains its supremacy. Even in a dark age, and surrounded by a heathenism in which were embodied the most debasing views of man's dignity and destiny, the Apostle could say—"We commend ourselves to every man's *conscience* in the sight of God." And there is especially in the bosom of every one reared under the influences of Christian civilization, the germ of loftier sentiments than those which commonly appear upon the surface of life—a germ which is ready upon a favourable opportunity to develope itself in its beauty and strength. Wicked men often fear to do right, lest contempt and scorn should form upon them. But their fears are groundless Let a man boldly face the popular sentiment where it is wrong, and it is not in depravity itself not to approve. It is said of the marquis De Valaze,and the count De Merci (two French noblemen), that having been educated together, they were reputed, amongst all who knew them, to be patterns of friendship, honour, and courage. For many years they had enjoyed each other's society without a rupture. But one unfortunate evening, after indulging freely in the use of wine, they went to a public-house, and engaged for amusement in a game of

backgammon. The marquis on the one hand was constantly successful, and the count on the other deeply chagrined on account of his ill-success. The marquis exulted with laughter, at his good fortune; and the count, still unsuccessful, lost his temper, became infuriated, and threw the box and dice in the face of his brother soldier. The whole company in the room were in amazement, and every gentleman present waited with impatience for the moment in which the marquis would sheath his sword in the bosom of the count. "Gentlemen," cried the marquis, "I am a Frenchman, a soldier, and a friend. I know and I acknowledge the laws of honour and will obey them. Every man who sees me wonders why I am tardy in putting to death the author of my disgrace. But, gentlemen, the heart of that man is entwined with my own. Our days, our education, our temperaments, and our friendships are coeval. But, gentleman, I will obey the laws of honour and of France; I will stab him to the heart," So saying, he threw his arms around his unhappy friend, and said, "My dear de Merci, I forgive you, if you will deign to forgive me for the irritation I have given to a sensitive mind, by the levity of my own." The pardon of the count was sealed by the embraces of the marquis. The king gave them a new honour in knighthood, and the noble conduct was greatly applauded by the company present, who felt that to "err was human; to forgive divine." And if a magnanimity like this, exercised toward a *friend*, does not fail to excite our admiration, how vastly deeper and purer is the homage of the soul for that nobler magnanimity which pardons a stranger and an enemy.

5, And this leads me to remark *a word upon the disgracefulness of duels.* It is called honourable with some (alas! that it should be said in a Christian land), when a man has received what he terms an insult, to avenge it, and redeem his character by shooting the insulter. Honourable for two men, *great men*, to shoot each other with muskets, pistols, or rifles! *Honourable!* Honourable for a man to forget that higher nature with which his Maker has endowed him, and by which he is distinguished from the brute, and to subject himself slavishly to the control of the basest animal passions! *Honourable* for a man to become a beast! Why then would it not be still more honourable to be furnished with all the weapons of offence and defence which belong to the animal race—horns, claws, and *tusks. Honourable!* One almost nauseates at the thought of belonging to the human family, when he remembers what creatures some have been who wore the human form and claimed a common descent from our great progenitor. *Honourable!* It is false. It is a libel on human nature. It is a shameful reproach upon the Christian religion, the American people, and upon an enlightened age. Even Julius Cæsar, the Roman general and statesman, who was born a hundred years before the Christian era, who lived and died a worshipper of heathen

gods, and who is most known as the destroyer of his country's liberties and the great usurper of power and dominion in his native Rome—even he could teach a lesson of honour to some of our modern sages. For when he received a challenge from Anthony to engage him in single combat, he very calmly answered the bearer of the message, "If Anthony is weary of life, tell him there are other ways to death than the point of my sword." Who ever deemed this an instance of cowardice? Cæsar was not a coward. All ages have admired this conduct as the act of a discreet and gallant man, who was sensible of his own importance, and knew how to treat the petulent and revengeful humor of a disconteted adversary with deserved contempt. Duelling honourable! A more shameful, puerile, childish scene was never witnessed. Think of it. Two of our hot bloods at Washington, or New York, take offence at each other, in view of some supposed insult (and this is childish enough)—a challenge must be sent and accepted—arrangements are made, and they come together and *shoot* at each other—which being done, their honour is vindicated, and friendship is restored. If any thing heinously wicked *could* be supremely ridiculous, such a sight must be. And the law which requires all this between gentlemen is called the "*code of honour.*" IT IS THE CODE OF SHAME.

6. *Our subject teaches us how to appreciate the talk about insults, of which there is so much in the world.* Men are very much afraid of passing over an insult. But if they were willing to learn wisdom of the wisest of men, and of the infinitely wise God, the text would assure them that to pass over both insult and injury in their highest glory. True feelings of *self-respect*, to say nothing of Christian principles, would place them above insults. It was the remark of Lord Chesterfield, if I mistake not—that he never would be insulted. Because if a man did not mean to insult him, of course he would not take it as in insult—that would be ungenerous. And if he did mean to insult him, he would not be insulted by him—he was unworthy of notice. In his concise phrase "no gentleman WILL insult me, and no other CAN." A man should have too high a sense of self-respect, too high a regard for his own dignity, *to condescend to be insulted.* And more, the man who is always ready to feel an insult, will always find enough who are willing to offer it. There are many who will insult you, if you are ready to be insulted; but if you are resolved not to be, men will respect you too much to attempt it.

7. Finally, we are taught *how we may settle honourably the various little disputes which arise between us and our fellow men,* —all cases of slander and abusive conduct not excepted. And this is truly a great desideratum. Men are very desirous of setting *honourably* the numberless difficulties that may arise between [redacted] others, and not knowing how to do it, they are often- [redacted]. Now, from this, my text perfectly and for

ever relieves them. It gives the most perfect and only true code of honor any where to be found. And its beauty is that it speaks not of fictitious but of real honor. "It is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression." The most pacific mode of settling our difficulties is at the same time the most honourable. To bear an injury is infinitely more honourable than to revenge it. And could we induce the world thus to believe, and thus to practice, what a Paradise would it become! No longer would it be the Aceldama which it has hitherto been, but by a magic transformation it would become as the garden of Eden for beauty and delight.

SERMON DCLVII.

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THINGS THAT CANNOT BE SHAKEN.

"Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."—HEBREWS xii. 26, 27.

IN Scripture phraseology the *earth* is often by a figure put for earthly or worldly things, such as worldly governments, temporal policies, and human institutions; while the phrase *heaven* represents religious things, mainly such as are external, such as the forms of religion, external church order, and the like. It was no doubt in this sense that our Lord used these terms in predicting the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and the breaking up and scattering of the Jewish people and church: "*Heaven and earth*," said he "*shall pass away*;" declaring in this way the subversion of the ancient polity, both political and ecclesiastical, and the bringing in of another dispensation. It seems most probable that we are to understand the expressions of the text in this way: "*Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.*" The Apostle had just alluded to the terrific displays of God's power on Mount Sinai, when his voice shook the earth, so that even Moses said, "*I do exceedingly fear and quake*," and now he declares, that once more not earth only but heaven shall also be shaken; alluding probably here to the prophecy of Haggai, which was uttered in reference to the coming of Christ, wherein he says, "*Thus saith the Lord of hosts, yet once it is a little while and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea*

and the dry land. And I will shake all nations: for the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory."

These remarks will assist us to a right understanding of our text. Great changes are predicted as taking place in the earth, both in the political and moral world, both in regard to the state and to the church, showing the instability of all things temporal; and the ultimate destruction of the powers which uphold them, and then bringing into view an entirely different state of things, a kingdom which cannot be moved, and things which can never be shaken.

In the contemplation of these two things we may be instructed.

I. From the beginning of the world to this day a scene of revolution and change has been exhibited on the earth, so that we can look to no point and say, see this is abiding, for mutability is inscribed on all things beneath the sun. Consider the ancient kingdoms among men, and where are they? They are gone—all gone—and many of them are now as, though they had never been. Where is now Assyria, and Babylon its capital, once the mistress of the world, sitting as queen amid the nations, and seeing no sorrow, being decked with fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and gold, and precious stones, and pearls, while her merchandise was most precious, and all the merchants of the earth flocked thither? Where is she now? and what is her state? Ah! she is lost. Her sins reached unto heaven, and God remembered her iniquities and rewarded her as she rewarded his people, filling double into her cup, as she did to others. Her great riches have come to nought, and her glories have expired in darkness. As a millstone is sunk in the waters, so Babylon is lost, and the very place of it can no more be found.

Egypt was once a mighty kingdom, and famous among the nations, but the sins and idolatries of the people provoked the Lord, and he gave them over to their enemies, till they were trodden down, and made base. Their princes became fools, and, their counsellors brutish.

And there was Tyre also, once a "*joyous city*," a "*crowning city*," whose merchants were princes, and whose traffickers were the honourable of the earth. But Tyre sinned against the Lord, and he stretched his hand over her in vengeance, till her multitudes melted away, and her fine buildings and stately palaces have given place to a few rough rocks where the fisherman dries his nets.

Nor have the kingdoms of Media, and Persia, and Grecia which were shown to Daniel in the visions of the ram and the rough goat, met any gentler doom. When they magnified themselves against the God of heaven, he shook them in pieces until they were destroyed, and all that can now be found of them is

but the ghost of what they were. More modern nations have shared a similar fate, for where God has not been acknowledged, or his word neglected, or his people persecuted, there his vengeance has come down, and the vials of his wrath have been poured out. There is very good reason for believing, that the revolutions and commotions of the nations of the earth, at the present day, are among the evants predicted to occur at the pouring out of the vials of God's wrath upon a sinful world. The elements of combustion seem to be fast accumulating among the nations of Europe, like some vast subterranean mine, or some hidden volcano, laboring to find vent, and kept back, perhaps, only by new materials thrown in, which are hardly yet in a state of fusion. The crackling of the concealed fire is heard, the ground trembles beneath the tread of its inhabitants, and yet a little while, and the fearful irruption will take place, and for the sins of those nations God will shake them to their foundation. And then, we have good reason to believe, will come the great battle of the day of God Almighty, spoken of in the Revelation, when the Beast and the false Prophet shall be taken, and shall be cast together into the lake, burning with fire and brimstone.

One of our leading politicians,* referring to the present stormy aspect of things in Europe, expresses himself in the following striking language:

"It has seemed to me as if the prerogative of crowns, and the rights of men, and the hoarded-up resentments and revenges of a thousand years, were about to unsheath the sword for a conflict, in which the blood shall flow as in the Apocalyptic vision, to the bridles of the horses, and in which a whole age shall pass away —in which the great bell of time shall sound for another hour— in which society itself shall be tried by fire and steel—whether it is of nature, and of nature's God, or not."

The question is an important one whether our own country will share in those punishments which are coming down upon the ungodly. We are indeed a very sinful people, and deserving of God's wrath; but there is still one encouraging circumstance: This nation has never formed any part of that power known in the Scriptures as "*the Beast*," meaning undoubtly the papal empire; it has never been, in any sense, the "*little horn*," spoken of by Daniel, which persecuted the Church of God, and wore out the saints of the Most High. So long as we keep clear of this we may hope to be exempted from those desolating judgments by which a righteous God will punish those nations who have yielded themselves as instruments for the "*man of sin*."

In many other things great changes are taking place, and God in his providence is shaking every human institution, and thus showing that mutability is inscribed on every thing beneath the

* Hon. Rufus Choate.

sun. Societies, and various combinations of men, formed for the best of purposes, do not always accomplish the thing desired, and they are changed and modified by their friends; and they even sometimes become the instruments of evil, and the providence of God hedges them in. So too constitutions of civil government and laws change, and in very deed God shakes not the earth only but heaven, signifying, as saith the text, "*the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.*" The contemplation of these is now before us; and we require—

II. What are the things which cannot be shaken?

To this inquiry we answer—

1. The purposes of God will never be shaken. He is in one mind, and none can turn him aside. Jehovah possesses perfect knowledge, and does not purpose or determine any thing without a full understanding of its propriety and suitableness for the end in view; and thus, with its results before him, he purposes to bring it to pass. The pleasure of God is the only rule of his purposes, and his own glory, the sole end proposed, and hence every part, whether minute or more important, is established on an unshaken basis, planned in his own eternal mind, and rendered subservient to the accomplishment of certain fixed ends. With men it is wholly different. They resolve on certain acts in view of certain contingencies; but the contingency may change, or wholly fail, and the action changes of course. But with God it is not so. As he can commit no mistake in willing or purposing, so he cannot change, nor can his purposes ever be shaken.

2. The reasons of God's moral government, or the laws of his kingdom will never be shaken, or changed. In human governments the laws are continually changing, because the circumstances of the people vary, and a law that is proper now, becomes inexpedient or improper hereafter. Hence arises the enactment of new laws, the additions to some that remain, and the total repeal of others. Such is the employment of legislatures from year to year. But no such thing can happen in the goverment of Jehovah. The reason why he prohibits sin can never alter. It was ever opposed to his holy nature, and ever will be, and hence the reason, for his law can never cease, and the law itself can never change. So of holiness; it was the same thing in the beginning as now; and the law which required men to love God with all their heart can never change, because the holy nature of God can never change, and he will never cease to be a pure and holy Being, and deserving of the love of all his rational offspring. The laws promulgated to Adam in Paradise, so far as they went into detail, were in accordance with those given to Moses on Mount Sinai, and these again were sanctioned by our Lord, and repeatedly laid down by his apostles. Thus the law of God is one from

the beginning. It changes not, and is one of the things which can never be shaken.

3. The foundation of the Church of Christ is one of those things which can never be shaken. Figures are used in the Scriptures to represent it, but they are all figures of durability and power. "*On this rock will I build my church*," said our Lord, "*and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" Christ is the fonndation of his Church, the corner-stone on which the building stands; and though the rain should descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon the building, it will not fall, for it is founded upon a rock. The prophet speaks of this foundation, as a stone laid in Zion, "*a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation.*" Paul speaks of it as a glorious temple—"*Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.*" And then again it is represented as some noble tree planted by the rivers of water, whose roots pierce to the centre,whose top reaches to heaven while its boughs, laden with goodly fruit, are extended to the utmost limits of the world. Thus the Church of God on earth is a permanent institution, having its foundation laid in the atonement made by the Divine Redeemer, and never to be overturned by all the convulsions of the world It is, most strictly speaking, "*a kingdom which cannot be moved.*" Human governments will be overturned, and the revolutions and convulsions of the nations will in time subvert the strongest; and some things in the external form of the church may be varied, but the thing itself will stand, and survive the destruction of the world.

4. The promises and threatenings of God's word will never be changed. From the beginning Jehovah has expressed his purposes of mercy toward his people in "*exceeding great and precious promises*," promises which have regard to the life which now is, as well as to life which is to come. These promises are substantially alike in every age of the world. They are expressed in various forms, and accommodated to various characters, but the amount of the whole is an assurance of glory, honour and peace, to every man that worketh good, "*to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.*" These promises were not one thing to day, and another thing to-morrow, one thing under this dispensation, and another thing under that; they were not in respect, yea and nay, as Paul terms it, meaning by this that they were not couched in equivocal language, sometimes a promise, and then a threatening; but adds the Apostle—"*As God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Sylvanus, and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was nay. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.*" The threatenings issued against sin bear also one uniform character. Sin was always that evil and bitter thing which God hated: it always aimed at his throne; it

was always contrary to his law, and it consequently was always forbidden under the same penalties, and threatened with the same divine wrath. The language of God, concerning it has ever been uniform, nothing less than "*indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.*" Thus both the promises and the threatenings of God's word are alike permanent, and are among the things that shall never be shaken.

5. The ultimate security of God's people, and the final triumph of his cause on earth, are also among those permament things on which we may safely rely. The love which God bears to his people is an unchangeable love, and having loved his own he loves thim to the end. The new nature which is unplanted by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the ransomed, is in fact a divine nature and cannot be lost. Like the rising of the morning it never goes out in darkness, but shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Hence the security of God's people. The world may be in revolution, and every thing beneath the sun may be shaken, but their salvation is sure—God has engaged for them, and they will not fail. The same power secures the final victory to the cause of religion on earth. Many enemies are round about the Church, but "*God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.*" No weapon can ultimately prosper that is raised against the Church. Many make war with the Lamb, but the Lamb shall overcome them, and come off victorious over all his foes.

Such are some of the things which can never be shaken: The purposes of God, the reasons of his moral government, the laws of his kingdom, the foundation of his Church, the promises and threatenings of his word, the final salvation of his people, and the ultimate security of his kingdom, all are things that can never be shaken. They are permanent, and they will stand when the world and all which it inherits shall dissolve.

In view of this whole subject, we may well rejoice that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Amid the convulsions of the world he sits supreme in the heavens, swaying an universal sceptre, and overruling the commotions of the nations to the advancement of his own glory. How safe are all things under his control. Fear not, ye people of God, for though the waves of worldly revolutions roar around you, Jehovah is above them all, and his kingdom shall stand, and his people will assuredly be saved.

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SERMON DCLVIII.

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DEPENDENCE ON GOD.

"Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name."—1 Chron. xxix. 11—13.

"Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it."—Ps. cxxvii. 1.

In these passages, God's strength and supremacy on the one hand are asserted, or implied, and on the other, the creatures dependence upon him. It is exceedingly important that the creature realize this his dependence upon God for every thing, especially for prosperity and success in all religious endeavours for himself or for others. There are, indeed, two extremes to be avoided. On the one side, that which supersedes the employment of human instrumentality. On the other, that which attributes to such instrumentality an inherent and adequate efficiency. To proceed on either of these grounds, must be followed by disappointment. We have the true doctrine and medium indicated everywhere in the Scripture. The creature, the human agent, must plant and water. God must give the increase. There will be no divine blessing unless there is some human effort, fidelity, culture to bless—and no blessing from above will follow the endeavour of the creature unless he make the endeavour, feeling and acknowledging that God alone can give it vitality and efficiency.

"Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it." It is trying, working, expecting, in the spirit of dependence, that brings the power and brings, at length, the blessed consummation.

Respecting this doctrine of dependence, it is safe to state these two propositions:

First, That it is a true doctrine.

Secondly, That it is a practically efficacious doctrine.

I. Upon the *truth of the sentiment*, that we are dependent upon God for all things in all our plans and labors to promote the cause of piety, in any sphere, larger or smaller, it would seem, little need be said. If we admit the perfection of the Being and the Rule of God, then it plainly follows that we are thus dependent—can do nothing separate from them—nothing without him. Life, existence, health, strength are God's gift. In the admirable and opulent words quoted in the text, "Both riches and honour come of thee; and thou reignest over all; in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all." We perceive we acknowledge the dependence in every physical endeavour. But it holds with a far greater strength and absoluteness, in spiritual things. Take, for instance, the great missionary enterprise, and we see at once how that in every stage and step, God's people are dependent upon him. Unless his hand and influence go with their labour, nothing is done. God alone can furnish them means. He must create the wealth, and by his providence put it in the right place; then by his Spirit create the disposition which will throw it forth where it is needed. He must also raise up the men to go out—give them the requisite qualities of mind and heart—put within them, sometimes, the spirit, which shall be as the breath and fire of his own holiness; then he must prepare and open fields for them—give them access and favour where they go; then, further, he must open the minds and hearts of the people to the messages they carry and make the truth they preach the power of God to salvation. There are a great many steps from the incipiency to the consummation, not one to be taken but by the presence and favour of God. Not one can be wanting without bringing defeat upon the whole undertaking. What is true of this, is equally true of religious undertakings of a more limited character. The ability to do—the efficacy of what is done, come alike and only from God. All favoring disposition—all the effects of truth, all the results of means, all the achievements of labour, are of God. This is sound philosophy, with which all reason concurs—incontrovertible fact which all experience confirms—the utterance of inspiration wherever the Bible speaks on the subject. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Though this truth is so obvious, being written on almost

every page of the Divine Word, written in all the history of the past, written in all our successes and defeats, yet we are dull in learning it. The head may admit it, but the heart is slow to rest upon it. And why should it be so, when the doctrine is so clearly true, so practically efficacious, so intimately linked with ultimate and large accomplishment?

II. We pass now to consider the *practical bearings of the sentiment.*

1. It being true that we are thus dependent upon God for the efficacy of our labors, it is altogether suitable that we feel and act upon this as a preparation—a basis of effort. Because, when a person feels so, he feels right; and when he feels right, he necessarily feels better and stronger than he does when he feels wrong. The feeling in question is a wholesome feeling. In it the individual not only satisfies his own conscience and sense of propriety, it is a position and feeling peculiarly acceptable in the sight of God. Wherever we take our proper place, he looks propitiously upon us, and upon ous endeavors in his service.

2. Another thing is: This sentiment and attitude of depend ence leads to effort; not to indolence, as many suppose, but to earnest endeavor; and this is the very nature of the thing, it being not the dependence of inaction, but of labor, toil, sacrifice, upon a higher power—first doing something, and then looking for God to bless that something, given to it vitality and achievement.

But still further; and here I make an important point—namely:

3. That this sense of dependence—the right sort, such as the Spirit begets, leads to effort of the right sort; and the right sort is the divinely prescribed sort. A genuine dependence upon God, in labors put forth for the advancemedt of his cause, leads those who possess it to the use of those means which God has appointed for this end. Feeling that we must have his blessing, it is natural to conclude that we can have it only by walking in his way. If he is to do the building while we do the labor, then our design must be shaped according to his pattern, and our labor be with the instrument and the material he has put into our hands.

The means God has appointed, comprehensively stated, is the gospel of his Son. The church of God's medium of power;—the people of God, his agents;—the truth of God their instrument of power. The church of God—those who have experienced in their own renovation the truth of God, in humble dependence upon divine grace, are to maintain and employ this truth and rely upon it as the great weapon of conquest. The truths of the Gospel—truths which affirms man's moral ruin, and bring forward a glorious Saviour, and a precious atonement, made by his death; and

a new creating spirit, the purchase of that death; and urge the necessity of a great change—the heart's renovation, and of a godly life, as the fruit of this change—these great truths and others like them, christians, individually or associated, are to receive and maintain. They are to hold them as all-important, as the ground-work of every thing in the spiritual growth and structure. They are to profess them as though they we not ashamed of them, especially at a time when such efforts are made to suppress distinctive gospel truth, and the tendency is to look upon the doctrines of christianity as useless dogmas—the cry being that the belief is nothing, only let the life be right; which is the same as to say, the sun is nothing, only let us have light and heat—the atmosphere is nothing, only let us have something to breathe. At such a time, and at all times, we say, let those who would build up the cause of God, clearly and unambiguously profess the great doctrines. Let them not only believe them with the heart and profess them with the mouth, let them also live them in the life—reproduce them in the character, in the spirit, and the actions. But for this—the right living, certainly with a life contradictory of the doctrine, a life dishonouring the truth, the doctrine, will be crippled—the truth crushed and nullified at the threshold of the temple. The christian's life, as helping or hindering the truth, is an essential and immutable consideration.

Again, the friends and supporters of the truths must cause them to be preached. While the truth is the means, preaching is God's appointment. It has pleased him "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Preaching, under God is to lay the foundation of the spiritual edifice, and fetch along the timbers, and hew them and fit them for their place. And in order to do this, it must be not the preaching of man's theories or schemes, but the great verities of God's revealing; very commonly unrelished in the world, because not fitted to the carnal or the fanciful tastes of the world; but soul-rousing and life-giving when they find access to the soul's secret chamber, and the life and power fall upon the soul's quick susceptibilities. Only let it be the doctrine of God—God will take care of it. Let it be clearly stated, conclusively reasoned, and faithfully applied, and it will do something, even an honourable and an endless work. This is God's way of building up his kingdom, and like his way to heaven it is the only way. It is for his people to take the great principles and provisions of his gospel, profess them, maintain them, and cause them to be proclaimed, doing it themselves, each one in his appropriate sphere; doing it in a more formal and conspicuous way, through the ministry of reconciliation. The point and the argument of this head is, that the proper feeling of dependence upon God will lead to the taking of this course; will induce indeed the greatest carefulness not to depart in the least from the way of working which God marks out; to keep ever clear

of the dreamy and shifting notions of man; to abide ever upon the eternal rock of God's doctrine and scheme, and herein we see clearly the value and the efficacy of this law of dependence.

4. The vital and efficacious bearing of the sentiment in question appears further in this: that it leads those who cherish it, directly to the fountain of all strength and success. Feeling weak, insufficient in themselves, most naturally will they repair to Him who has strength, to whom nothing is too hard, and who is ever ready to help.

Though they use the means God has directed,—present the truth he has given—they know well enough that it will accomplish nothing without his blessing. His own mighty power must go with it, before there will be any adequate power in it. Preachers may preach as Stephen did, till they are stoned for their pain-giving faithfulness; the stones themselves may rise up in the place of the slain and preach with a like faithfulness; the dead may come forth from their graves, and the spirits join them from the invisible scene, and preach with the eloquence of heaven. and the impassioned energy of despair, and the best of it, and all of it will accomplish nothing in the conversion and redemption of men:—this is their conviction, robust and profound within them, it is what they know. And what is the effect of it? Not to let down the importance of truth, or of preaching,—of any labour, argument, or eloquence to extend it, and give it power;—but this, the effect is to bring them to the throne of God in prayer, knowing that they themselves cannot do it—knowing that God can, and that he waits to be inquired of. They come to his throne and if they come humbly and in faith, they do come in vain. They get help. They draw down power—a power that is felt in the mighty touch and sweep of it. And there is progress—something is done that will abide accomplished, and be revealed in glory; and all because of this spirit of dependence, which brought them straight and earnest to that fountain of power with a heart and a faith to open its treasured resources and energies upon the world.

5. The practical efficacy of the sentiment appears further in this—that it is a greatly invigorating sentiment. It not only leads to effort, and to effort of the right sort—using the right means; and leads also the soul to God for a blessing upon the means, its tendency is to foster vigorous and sustained effort—labour. It puts into the people a mind to work, and work with wholeness and heartiness. And how does it do this; I answer, by putting within them, the spirit of hope—the assured belief that their labour will not be in vain in the Lord. It is God—his means they are to use—his efficiency they are to seek and wield—his cause they are to promote. Labouring now with such dependence, environed as they know themselves to be, with such powers, may they not labour in hope? Were it themselves only; were the enterprise

based upon a boasted self-reliance; were they to enter upon the warfare in their own name, and at their own charges, there might be, there inevitably would be, doubts and distrust, sufficient to dampen the energy, and extinguish all disposition to try. Such is the very nature of distrust and despondency. It weighs down the soul in the chilling glooms of inaction; while the opposite is the effect of the hope which this spirit of dependence, and consequently of trust, begets. It is to lift up and cheer the heart, and brighten the countenance, and nerve the soul for instant and manly endeavor; because we are sure of the end. Other labors may fail, these will not fail. Other enterprises may come short, this of redemption will attain its consummation. We are sure, because we have put ourselves upon the foundation God has laid; have linked our toil and our prayer fast to his blessed promise; and joined our heart to the infinite heart of his Son; and made our interest one with the great kingdom of his grace. Whenever we can do this, as individuals, or as churches, we are ready for anything—for peace or conflict—for life or death—ready to launch out into the deep, to go any where that Christ will go with us—to enter upon any work which Christ bids us do, because we have confidence in him—because when we feel weak then are we strong. Such is the invigorating tendency of this doctrine of a felt dependence.

There is not only an invigorating, but also a persistent efficacy in the sentiment. It induces the mind to hold on; when nothing seems to be done for a long time; when no progress is apparent from the labor and the sacrifices, so long and so abundantly bestowed, this feeling of dependence urges to perpetuity of labor. The argument is very short and simple. The efficiency being of God, it will be revealed in his own good time; assuredly at some time, it will appear; his own crowning blessing will come. The depending and waiting Christian knows, that if he falls back, he forfeits everything; loses all the toil, expense, and heart's treasure thus far bestowed. If he take off his hand, one single hour, before God's time comes, he foregoes the whole; but if he keep on his hand, and keep firm and true his heart, the very crisis of his discouragement may be the harbinger of the king's approach, and the day of his own triumph. There may be great opposition, formidable powers arrayed against, barriers seemingly insurmountable towering in the path. Shall he for these falter and give over? It is a *brief* process, I say again. With his cherished doctrine of dependence for his premises, he springs boldly to the conclusion. Against all, God helping, he holds on and goes forward; and the lions flee, and the obstacles sink, and he comes victorious to the end and consummation of his hopes.

We see all through, how in the things of God, this doctrine of dependence, stands associated with ultimate success. Whatever Christian, or body of Christians will labor with this feeling—this doctrine embalmed in the heart, with the strength and steadiness

it inspires, employing the means and only those which it dictates and sanctions—the great principles of the gospel, professed and lived, and loved, and preached, and the promised Spirit sought in earnest prayer; whoever in this tone and frame, will thus labor, and hold on against all signs and all weathers, will accomplish much in the end for human welfare—much for the regeneration of society, and the saving of the souls of men. All other plans and schemes, and theories abroad, are only experiments; mere mushroom-growths, the offspring of human pride and restlessness, But this other process, I have sketched, a chain at once of adamantine strength, and of shining links of love—constructed, from the golden treasures of the gospel, reaching back and making fast to the throne of God himself, and extending forward till it shall compass at length a world within the pale of a willing and joyous allegiance—this has stood the test and strife of ages, and has come out brighter and stronger from all the fires it has gone through. Many will scorn this way. Still they are blessed by it, if ever blessed at all. The true reformations are where God's word and signal working are. The decency, the morality, the piety are here—the foundation-stones, and the supporting pillars of the great edifice of society are here. All else but hay and wood and stubble. Our strength and valid expectation come only in a fixed trusting here—will be realized fully, gloriously, in a child-like leaning upon our God.

Let me in closing just indicate three or four remarks suggested by this subject.

1. This doctrine or sentiment of dependence shuts the door against most of the excuses made for withholding Christian endeavor. The greatest excuse of all, the one most frequently bubbling out, is this:—"I am such a poor weak creature, it is of no use to attempt any thing." This sentiment broods in many a heart, like a smothering ash bed, upon all the coals of Christian zeal; and is ever coming from the lips to chill and throw back other timid and adventuring hearts. "O, we are such little feeble ones; moats in God's immensity; 'tis of no use." I say, it is all wrong. You can do it *perhaps*—certainly you can try. And it matters little whether you try, or Gabriel tries; for neither you nor Gabriel can do it without God. And God can do it, and will as soon do it, through you, as through Gabriel. Before our blessed doctrine of an ever present and ever working God, always ready to do through our humble endeavor, human littleness and feebleness has nothing to say, but only to go forward, believe and be strong in the Lord.

2. Our subject authorizes any measure of Christian expectation. I only name this. You see, at once, what a scale and scene of wonder it opens to the vision of your faith.

3. This feeling of dependence, is an admirable beauty in the character. The creature in his place giving God the throne;

God shining from his throne, and the creature dwelling beneath, in the flooding radiance of his beneficence; it is fitting—it is beautiful.

4. It is always a blessed feeling in the soul—something that makes the soul quiet and happy; to refer all might and efficacy to God; all our achievements and prosperity to him; to feel that gushing thankfulness; to render praise for his bounties; to thank and praise him still, there is nothing this side of heaven more like the essence and fulness of heaven's joy.

Finally. It is a feeling which will bring every person, truly and deeply cherishing it, within the circle and pale of God's eternal blessedness—the humility, the lowliness, the breaking down and the sinking of self, beneath the burden of your sins, these will bring you where Christ hung and bled: and standing there, and beholding that wondrous sight, with such a heart, taught its sins—your burden will fall. And the moment you bow in faith, your soul shall come and dwell in the favored circle of the redeemed and rejoicing in the kingdom of our God.

SERMON DCLIX.

BY REV. AARON L. LINDSLEY,

SOUTH SALEM, N.Y.

THE DAYS OF OLD.*

"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy fathers, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee."—DEUT. xxxii. 7.

MOSES, the Leader and Prophet of Israel, was one of the most remarkable personages whose names have come down to us in history. He occupied a station of the highest responsibility ever entrusted to man; and he discharged all obligations with the utmost fidelity. He elevated a race of bondmen into the dignity of a nation. He restored to them liberty, religion and law. His success as a Leader, was not more remarkable than his wisdom as a Legislator and Teacher. And we admire his true greatness of soul, when he ascribes all his successes to the direct interposition or the overruling Providence of God. His plans were accomplished because the Almighty was his guide. In every word he uttered, in every movement he made, he acknowledged himself

*A Discourse occasioned by the death of JEREMIAH KEELER, a soldier of the Revolution, delivered in the Presbyterian Church of South Salem, Westchester County, N. Y., Feb. 27, 1858.

to be the agent of the Most High, whose will respecting the descendants of Abraham he was commissioned to execute.

Having brought the numerous band of emigrants to the close of their long pilgrimage, he cites them to a grand review. The chief is about to resign his commission; for he and they must part before they cross the boundary of the promised land. His warfare is ended; he has fought his last battle; he will soon be at rest forever. At this point he addressed a farewell message to his countrymen, in the celebrated song, composed by divine command, of which the text forms a portion. He rehearsed the dealings, promises and threatenings of God respecting the Hebrews. He exhorts them to obedience by a review of God's mercies; and in this connection occur the words of the text: "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee."

He sends them for instruction to the past, while their gaze is intently fixed on the immediate future. The brilliant prospects opening before them might cause them to forget the lessons which their long abode in the desert should convey. The words of admonition were therefore timely and important. In all their career, they had never more needed the counsels of wisdom, and the guidance of God, than when they were about to enter upon their long expected possessions. The occasion demanded a careful review of the principles which they had adopted, and a reverent compliance with the will of that beneficent Being, who had chosen them for His peculiar people from among all the nations of the earth. By such a retrospect, they would discover the hand of God in the disposal of every event; and be able to trace, amidst the agitated and conflicting affairs of time, the steady current of an all-wise Providence in "the days of old," and throughout "the years of many generations." Their fathers could show them this unvarying course in the government of God: their elders could tell them of His revealed plans, His promises, and His faithfulness.

Occasions frequently arise, not only in the progress of nations but also in the life of individuals, which justify the wisdom of retrospection. And we are naturally led to "remember the days of old," by the particular occasion which we have this morning assembled to honour with our mournful respect for the dead. It invites us to examine what our fathers have shown us, and listen to what our elders can tell us We look with filial respect upon the man whose head is silvered by the ninety-third winter of his life. He is the remnant of an age gone by. The span of his existence sweeps the circle of a century. He stands by the wayside of passing generations an oracle to be consulted, a monument to be revered. His is a voice from the heroic age of our country, relating from memory the narrative of events which

have long been the themes of history. No descendant of the revolutionary fathers can remain unmoved in the presence of one of their compatriots in arms, whose protracted life, embracing the manhood of three generations, brings vividly to view his compeers, long since departed. The heart glows with gratitude to God when we read the record of those times of battle and of victory for the unalienable rights of man: but the sight of a relic of the old Continental Line that pressed onward through reverses, destitution and self-sacrifice, up to final triumph and independence, stirs the heart with unwonted emotion, for it is the glorious past speaking eloquently to *the present*, not in the page of history, but with the living voice. It leads us to "remember the days of old," when the American colonists resisted the invasion of their natural and chartered rights: when the question was, whether they should remain subjects of the British constitution, or become vassals of the British throne.

It would ill become this day or this place to consider principally the secular issues which were involved in the momentous struggle that followed. We shall find an appropriate theme in the RELIGIOUS INTERESTS which were at stake. The claims set up and the pretensions made by many who have since come in for a share of freedom's blessings, require that our countrymen should be reminded that the war for independence was not exclusively a contest for civil liberty. The dear-bought rights of conscience were remotely jeopardized, and more directly the principle of religious liberty. The belief is well-founded, that if the Colonies had been subdued, the Church Establishment of England would have been declared by law the established church of all the Colonies, as it had been already in many of them. The confiscation of church property belonging to those who were called Dissenters, to the use of the established church, had already been perpetrated in some instances by the king's officials; and the power of a proud conqueror, supported by a mercenary Parliament, would not have scrupled at any pretext to accomplish an object, cherished by the temporal and spiritual aristocracy of the mother country. "No bishop, no king," a maxim first expressed by a sovereign of England, was a favourite saying of the nobility. And if the principle of "taxation without representation" had triumphed in the defeat of the colonists, this country would no doubt have been covered with lords spiritual as well as lords temporal, church lands as well as crown lands, church and crown united, and that monstrous system of ecclesiastical robbery called tithes, by which a man is compelled to pay for the support of a sect which he disapproves. A rich and worldly State church lording it over God's heritage, would have driven the colonists back into the wilderness again, to be enslaved as soon as their advancing prosperity [illegible] the rapacious cupidity of kingly power.

This result was justly feared by many of the colonists whose fathers had escaped, or who had themselves fled from religious oppression in the old world; and they were like the elders of the children of Issachar, "men having understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." Among them were descendants of the Huguenots of France, who "remembred the days of old," when their ancestors were tormented with savage barbarity, or tortured to death, because they would not give up their Bible and their God; and who did not forget that night of old—that night of unequalled horrors—which followed the eve of St. Bartholomew's. Among them were representatives of the brave Hollanders, who asserted their independence and maintained their Protestant Christianity, against the most formidable popish powers of Europe. Among them were children of the Scottish covenanters, who met to worship God in desolate retreats—who hid in dens and caves of the earth to escape outrages and death at the hands of a brutal soldiery, obeying a more brutal king. Among them were descendants of Cromwell's warriors, to whom Englishmen are at this day indebted for some of their most valued privileges, and who had victoriously fought in defence of the Reformation on the plains of Europe, and had thus learned to oppose tyranny by force. With one threatening word, their master stopt the bloody persecution of the Waldenses; and thenceforth, during the life of Cromwell, persecution was at an end. Among them pre-eminently were the honoured Puritans of England, who feared God rather than king or prelate, and were therefore exiled from their country, and compelled to carve a home out of the wild forests of America.

All these classes had been sufferers for conscience sake under the power of despotic kings, although in some of these cases, the royal authority was obedient to an ecclesiastical power that claimed to be superior to all the monarchs of the earth. Hence these classes of colonists were suspicious of every encroachment of the crown on their chartered rights, as jeopardizing or invading their religious privileges. To the effect of this conviction, the success of the American Revolution is directly traceable. While many engaged in the contest mainly for the defence of civil rights, many were moved to the same measure to maintain the supremacy of a free Gospel in connection with civil liberty. And hence, on the main issue, a general harmony of counsels and of effort prevailed throughout the Colonies.

But it was the Puritan spirit which reigned over all that mighty contest. It has been well said that God sifted the kingdoms for wheat wherewith to sow the virgin soil of America. And the same God suffered not the old monarchies to reap the precious harvest. The Puritan spirit was transplanted into the new world, and here found an ample field, a fertile soul, and a vigorous growth. The Spirit of the Lord was in it, and "where the Spirit

of the Lord is, there is liberty." Its birth-place was Geneva. It was cradled in France, and rocked in the storm of persecution. It was nurtured among the rugged glens of Scotland. It grew to man's estate under the heavy hand of oppression in England. The dungeon could not confine it. The faggot and the sword could not destroy it. And from this baptism of blood, it crossed the ocean, and trod the free shores of the new world with the activity of a strong man armed.

Its foundation principle was, the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Its leading doctrine was, justification by faith in the atoning merits of Christ alone, resting on the covenant of an unchanging God. Its ministry was of equal authority, to be called of God and not of man, and to show by their doctrine and their deeds whether they were in the line of succession from the Apostles. Its ordinances were Scriptural, carefully excluding every ceremony which was not enjoined by the Word of God. It yielded nothing to mere human authority: it subjected every thing to the divine command. It declared by the mouth of one of its disciples, "In matters of the Church, there may be nothing done but by the Word of God." And again, "It is not enough that the Scripture speaketh not against them, unless it speak for them." As the Scriptures hold every soul accountable to God; hence the right and duty of every soul to possess and study the Word of God; and hence also the right, not of private interpretation, but of private judgment on what the Will of God ordains. Any denial of these doctrines, and any abridgement of these rights the Puritans considered an infringement of the authority of Christ, the Supreme Head of his Church, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords.

In this general statement, we discover the foundation of human rights, the natural equality of man, the seeds of just and equal laws, the true end and aim of all civil government. For the mind once emancipated from spiritual despotism, pants for civil liberty, through which alone religious freedom can be fully enjoyed. And the man who traces all human authority to Christ, and acknowledges none which does not descend from Him, will not easily yield to despotic power, whether it be exerted in Church or in State, by preast or king.

These views were held, almost without exception, by the great Reformers of the sixteenth century; they were eminently advocated by the leading spirits of Geneva: and hence the Reformation not only brought back a hidden Bible and a buried Gospel, but it also gave birth to modern liberty. The system of doctrines obtained its full practical development in the American colonies. It prevailed throughout the country. And this fact is sufficient to account for the union of the colonies in the war of independence. And in this view of this case, we are not surprised to learn that ministers of the Gospel preached the duty of forcible

opposition. In their minds, "resistance to tyrants was obedience to God." Large numbers of their people were accordingly found in the patriot assemblies and armies; and when the decisive struggle had begun, they themselves did not hesitate to exchange the sanctuary for the camp, in order to preserve among the troops, by their preaching and their example, the spirit of piety and the love of liberty. They exerted a widespread and salutary influence, which was well understood and acknowledged at the time; and their services should never be forgotten. Their voice was also heard in the halls of legislation; and while Timothy Dwight, afterwards the honoured President of Yale College, was a chaplain in the army on the Hudson, John Witherspoon, the President of the College of New Jersey, was a member of the Continental Congress, and affixed his signature to the immortal Declaration of Independence. And the forerunner and model of that Declaration, be it known, was the production of the old Puritan spirit, which always vindicated the rights of man. It was drafted and adopted by a convention composed mainly of refugees from religious oppression in the old world, assembled at Mechlenburg, in North Carolina, in the month of April, 1776, a few months prior to the adoption by Congress of the great Declaration, in many respects identical with it. The mind is struck with the grandeur of the subject when we read the beginning of that document—"We hold these truths to be self-evident: and all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuits of Happiness"—and when we remember that praying men, God-fearing men, first gave these glorious truths to the world.

When the Virginia House of Burgesses adopted resolutions of forcible resistance, next to the eloquent Patrick Henry, who was the principal instigator of that step, stood Mr. Muhlenburgh, a Lutheran Minister, who afterwards led his parishioners to the war.

The descendents of the Pilgrim Fathers had so long enjoyed comparative freedom in civil and religious affairs, that they could not quietly submit to the tyranny of either king, parliament, or priesthood, and hence the spirit of opposition in New England was universal.

Without mentioning many other instances equally deserving of notice, the foregoing will serve to illustrate the fact that Christian men and Christian ministers endangered their fortunes and their lives in that decisive conflict: and this fact finds the principal explanation in their adherence to those sacred principles which we have already mentioned. Confiding in the protection of Heaven, they committed themselves to Him that judgeth righteously; and the result justified their faith and rewarded their highest expectations. Without the cordial co-operation of these praying men, it cannot be supposed that the colonies could have been successful;

nor is it probable that forcible resistance would have been resolved on, if they had opposed it. While they withheld nothing which men highly prize, they supplied the only element of final success, and that was an operative faith in God. With His Word for their guide, and the history of Christ's Kingdom in the earth before them, they pressed resolutely forward through the most painful vicissitudes till peace came and perched on the banner of victory to reward their incredible hardships, and make them the benefactors of coming ages.

The importance of the principles involved in the struggle they could weigh in the balances of the sanctuary. They could distinguish the transitory from the permanent. Obedient only to the will of Him who says, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man in whom there is no help," they watched the "signs of the times," they compared them with past events, they applied the tests of Scripture and of Providence; and in this concentrated light, their opinions were formed, and their measures adopted. They gained a correct "understanding of the times," by watching the thickening events as they arose through the heat of discussion and the smoke of conflict; and in that serene upper air, they viewed them in their true relations and tendencies. Beneath, was the will of God underlying all the eras of time: above was the Providence of God, regulating all the affairs of time: in the midst, were panting mortals, struggling in peace or war, never at rest, while the Spirit of God moved among them to accomplish through human agency his sovereign will; and they who submitted to his guidance were shielded by his providence till their work was done. With such a religious belief, they looked for the finger of God, and they saw it. It pointed along a pathway of poverty and suffering, conflict and death, to the glorious and expanding prospect of a mighty nation of self-governed free men, such as the world had never seen, endowed with the means of securing every temporal and spiritual good They might not survive to enjoy it. They might perish by the way, fainting and alone, yet not alone, for God would be there. They might fall in the murderous shock of armies. But that divine finger and that sublime prospect;—ah, perish every thought of inglorious ease, every suggestion of self-seeking expediency, that the will of God in man's redemption may be done! It was the practical operation of faith! And that man is blind who does not see in these governing principles an element of resolute exertion which makes men brave danger, disaster and martyrdom, in the defence and maintenance of eternal right! It was this element which operated more or less on all classes engaged in the struggle for independence. A few venture to call it faith in the justice of the cause: they look too low; for without an overruling God justice would be exiled from the earth. Some call it faith in the progress of man toward perfection; they look too high, and

are lost in fleecy clouds. But the widespread influence of faith in the God of justice who has provided for human progress toward perfectibility in the plan of man's salvation, united all in a fraternity of common interests and a common destiny. It sent them to the tented field, each man a hero, defying poverty, starvation and death, that they might bequeath a freeman's birthright to millions yet unborn.

Who does not see the guiding hand of God in this momentous struggle for the rights of man? Examine similar contests in modern times, and they have been either defeated, or if successful, have produced no beneficent results, in consequence of the absence of these controlling principles. It will always be so while time endures. Nations must be prepared for self-government by the teachings of God's Word, in order to qualify them for the lawful use of freedom. They only are qualified for liberty who acknowledge the supremacy of a just and liberal constitution and its executors; who respect the rights of others as they regard their own; who are obedient to the laws through the force of moral obligation, and not through fear of an inquisitorial police or a standing army; and who are willing to yield private preferences to the public good. He whose character answers to this description deserves the honoured epithet of a *self-governed* man. And he is fitted for a useful and benevolent citizenship, who who had learned these lessons of political wisdom; for in them are comprehended the truth that is necessary for him to know on the point of a citizen's duty.

The end of all government is to secure to every loyal citizen the peaceable enjoyment of his rights. But what are *human rights?* No written constitution—no statute law, can *create* them. They can be declared and ratified by constitutions; they can be defined and guarded by enacted laws. But, as they are no man's gift, so they are no nation's gift. The Rights of Man are his inalienable privileges under the government of God. And the powers of human government "are ordained of God" for the purpose of securing those rights to every man. But private rights must necessarily be limited by contact with the rights of others. Hence the individuals who compose a free State must agree to yield private rights so far as public justice and the public welfare demand, and to sustain and defend each other in the enjoyment of private rights within the limits circumscribed by the general good. This constitutes a just, equal, and well regulated freedom; and to secure this to every citizen is the end of all good government.

How can this great end be attained? Not by standing armies, not by frowning fortresses, not by a secret police. There are many moral considerations involved, and the only lasting and successful government must therefore to a great extent be moral.

No man can invent his own rights—no State can create them: they are the gift of our Maker; and therefore we must learn of Him their nature and extent, and to Him we are in the highest sense responsible for the use of them. Hence, a knowledge of these rights, and of their limitations, is of vital moment in a free government, because where power does not overawe, self-restraint should govern. The Author of Human Rights is the best teacher of them; and His infallible instructions are contained in the Sacred Scriptures. They alone can prepare the nations for self-government; and thus were the English Colonies in America prepared. The proof is every where throughout all the contest and in its results. There was the Gospel preached and loved among those warlike bands. There was prayer in the Congress, and there was prayer in those armies, from the commander-in-chief to the common soldiery, who honoured religion by supplicating the interposition of the Unseen Hand that rules the destinies of nations. And when reverses fell upon our arms, and fear was spreading like a contagion through the country, *Proclaim a fast!* was the voice of Congress; and the proclamation went abroad, and the army and the people prostrated themselves before the Majesty of Heaven, acknowledging their unworthiness, but pleading their dependence, and imploring his help—a sublime act of allegiance to the God of nations and of men.

Time would fail me to show the numerous proofs of the wide-spread religious feeling which was manifested, not only by individuals, but also by legislative bodies, all tending to show that the great God our Saviour was the ultimate dependence and resort of the revolutionary fathers. But I ask you to look at this from another point of view. Consider their union in adversity. It is not difficult to find reasons for their union, when success attended their marches; but what held the patriot armies together, when the cause seemed utterly hopeless, when the continental treasury was bankrupt, when the brave soldiers barefooted tracked their way in blood upon the frozen snow, when starvation put out the mess fires, and nakedness put beggary to the blush? Patriotism will go great lengths to stem the torrent of reverses: but no love of country without a stronger motive could stand against such unexampled deprivations. Ah, the power of God, who is the "strength of the needy," withstood the otherwise inevitable result of such calamities. In distant homes there were many trembling but trustful hearts who had given their kindred to the war. They had power with God, for they had learned to pray; and daily petitions on behalf of those intrepid, self-sacrificing men were offered by pious souls who had nothing more to give, unto Him who "doeth according to his will in the army of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth."

1. Viewed in the least unfavorable light, war is a deplorable expedient for settling difficulties. It evils are always terrible.

It is the last argument of kings; but it sometimes works their own destruction. The patriot fathers were men of peace. But they had fled to this continent to escape religious oppression; and they felt that if their asylum for civil and religious liberty were destroyed, there was no land to which they might escape, and found another empire for God. Therefore they sought for years to avert the blow by deputations, petitions, and remonstrances; and when these and every peaceful expedient were fruitless, they prepared for war. It were better for them to die freemen than to live slaves.

2. We are prone to consider too exclusively the civil aspects of the revolutionary struggle. Our histories, narrating the obvious and striking events of those times, do not lucidly and philosophically display the religious features of that era; and in some of them, religion is allowed to have very little to do with it. We protest against this as unfaithful to truth, unjust to posterity. The materials of a *complete* history, civil and religious, are yet sufficiently ample; and whoever judiciously executes this work will supply an important vacancy in our national annals, and deserve the honors of his country. Such a work, among other things, will show, first, That the religious element occupied a place in the causes of the Revolution much more important than is assigned to it in the current histories of that event. Secondly, That the Bible is the charter of our liberties. It taught our fathers the true doctrine of human rights, and hence its principles of morality and benevolence enter into the foundation of our institutions and the spirit of our laws.

The consequence of overlooking these important truths is seen, on the one hand, in a disposition manifested in some quarters to yield to the audacious demands of foreign religionists, who claim privileges which are wisely withheld from any denomination, in order to preserve the equal rights of all; and on the other, of infidels and scoffers, mostly from foreign lands, who claim the privilege of abusing our liberties and trampling on our most cherished religious rights. To yield to the demands of either, will be the entering wedge of destruction. The ancient republics were destroyed by the corruption of the people. The low state of public morals in our land is shown by the increase of crime, the evasion of pecuniary obligation, the profligacy of political parties, and the disregard of religious ordinances. The only barrier to these polluting streams, swollen by foreign currents, is that which our fathers erected in "the days of old." It was a pure faith established on the Word of God. They found it firm enough to bear them through every change, disaster, and struggle; and they bequeathed to their descendants, together with its rewards, the benefit of their example. To follow human guides in this day of light is egregious folly; and he is a conceited fool who pretends to be wise above what is written in the

Sacred Scriptures. The lively oracles of God are the only guides to national prosperity, the only safe-guards of public honor and fidelity, the only trustees of permanent and future welfare. Though they are in their nature unchangeable, yet they are endowed with a living power which stimulates human exertion, and therefore favors change in the right direction, and with a flexibility which adapts them to the basis of every stage of human advancement. Hence they are the only true principles of stability and progress, which are the twin-angels of reform. The one retains all that is good, while the other reaches forward after better things for man. Happy is that nation whose institutions are founded on this rock of eternal righteousness; "happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

3. We should strive to retain and perpetuate the influence of that honest, patriotic and religious spirit which prevailed in our country in "the days of old" This Republic has come to be too powerful to fear the armies of foreign nations. Its most formidable foes will arise within its own bosom. If our liberties are to be destroyed, at this day, they will be lost through the suicidal act of profligate and misguided citizens, led on by the specious cry of "Reform or Philanthrophy," under whose banners much mischief has already been perpetrated. If, in this land of ours, industry is well rewarded and property is secure; if education is highly valued, and knowledge abounds; if morals are elevated, religion honored, and homes happy; if all men are free to do that which is lawful and right, we should not forget that these blessings are directly traceable to the liberal patriotism and piety of those, who laid the foundations of our institutions, and gave tone to our morals, "in the days of old." On their posterity devolves the less arduous work of transmitting, at least unimpaired, these inestimable blessings. We are called, not to originate, but to preserve—not to overturn, but to maintain; and from the fixed and central point of Equal Rights—the pivot on which all complicated machinery of our government revolves—carry forward among men the great work of virtue and liberty—faith and love.

Our fathers and our elders, in character and in life, furnished convincing illustrations of the safety, peace and happiness resulting from adherence to the principles which we have been considering; and we turn with a mournful pleasure to the particular instance before us in the person of JEREMIAH KEELER, the patriot soldier, the useful citizen, the sincere Christian; for the following brief notices of whom I am indebted to another hand.

Mr. Keeler was born May 6th, 1760, in the town of Ridgefield, Fairfield County, Connecticut.

In the spring of 1777, a party of the enemy having burnt Danbury, and proceeding through Ridgefield on their work of destruction, were opposed by a small company of militia. Mr. K. was aroused to patriotic ardour by witnessing the short engage-

ment that followed, and at the solicitation of Col. Bradley, eagerly enlisted in the army, being at the time, not 17 years of age. With the Connecticut Line he shared the fatigues and dangers of the three memorable years that immediately followed. Shortly after which, being selected by Baron Steuben, he joined the Light Infantry commanded by General de La Fayette, under whom he held the post of orderly Sergeant. He was frequently appointed to execute difficult and responsible duties; and on an occasion of this kind the Marquis presented him with a sword and his thanks as a testimonial of his regard for a faithful and courageous soldier. At the memorable siege of Yorktown, when La Fayette's Brigade was employed to storm one of the British forts, Sergeant K. was one of the first who in the midst of a murderous fire, scaled the breastworks, and compelled the enemy to yield. He witnessed the surrender of Cornwallis, which virtually terminated the war: but he remained faithfully at his post, until the disbanding of the forces in 1783, having participated in the reverses and successes of the Continental Army, without interruption since his enlistment. As a vivid illustration of the sufferings which the brave soldiers endured, Mr. K. relates that he was sometimes so tormented by hunger as to be tempted to gnaw the flesh from his own shoulders!

But we turn with pleasure to the character of the departed patriot, as exhibited in a long subsequent life, in the midst of peaceful scenes. For nearly half a century a disciple of Jesus, he bore a faithful testimony to the reality of the Gospel—a "living epistle, known and read of all men."

His reverence for the Sabbath was an example well worthy of imitation at this time. Within his house on that holy day the most perfect order and quietness must be observed. During the hours not devoted to public worship, the Word of God was his constant companion, and well did he become acquainted with its history, its doctrines, and its requirements. As a faithful parent he instilled its precious truths into the minds of his children, and thus furnished them with a fitting preparation for the trials and responsibilities of life. The *first-day* also, was to him a solemn occasion, which he religiously observed.

As a counsellor, he was a safe guide. Principles of the strictest integrity controlled his conduct and formed the basis of his advice to others.

He was emphatically a peace-maker, studying the harmony of the entire neighbourhood, and endeavoring both by precept and example to bring into general operation the law of kindness,—a practical obedience to that new rule, that as Christ hath loved us, so should we also love one another.

He was hospitable; a consistent observer of the Scripture direction, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers." Especially was his abode a refuge for the distressed and needy, who found in him

a sympathising friend, and by whom they were never sent empty away.

But pre-eminently as a Christian did the excellence of his character shine forth with the brightest lustre. He was humble and devout, cheerful in the performance of duty, and punctual in his attendance on the services of the sanctuary. He said *less* in regard to his private feelings, than some would have done, but we doubt not experienced much of that peace which passeth understanding. During the latter part of his life, being laid aside from active duties by his infirmities, much of his time was spent in the retirement of his own room in acts of devotion, communing with Him who is no longer seen through a glass darkly, but face to face.

The approach of death brought with it no terrors to him; for he had long regarded the dread messenger as a welcome friend who would remove the shackles of clay, and enable him to wing his way to that house not made with hands, whose happy occupants shall never more be distressed by the trials of life or the infirmities of age. His hope, built upon the Rock of Ages, did not fail him; and when informed that he could not long survive, he replied, "I am ready to go whenever the summons comes,"—a blissful confidence, in view of which the most thoughtless might offer the request of one of old, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" His departure we should not regret; for he has gone to his everlasting reward.

In closing this discourse, we cannot refrain from the expression of one interesting thought. This aged veteran was a soldier in another army besides the one we have mentioned. He had felt the chains of the soul's slavery; and he heard a voice from Heaven exclaiming, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed!" He enlisted for life under the great Captain of Salvation. He maintained a successful warfare against the soul's adversary, with weapons which are not carnal but spiritual, and he now wears the victor's crown. I invite you, beloved hearer, to participate in this "glorious liberty of the sons of God!" The civil freedom which you now enjoy—the blood-bought gift of a patriotic ancestry—is as a means to this glorious end. The act of Providence which conferred the one, bids you accept the other. Be no longer an alien from the Commonwealth of Israel, which is now the great Republic of God's people, whose citizenship is in Heaven. The Lord Jesus Christ proclaims liberty to the captives "in Satan's bondage held." Put on therefore the whole armour of God, that you may war a good warfare, and come off conqueror and more than a conqueror, through Him that hath loved us. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life The conflict may be long and obstinate, but the victory is certain, and the reward is infinite. Our glorious Leader looks back on the long line of struggling combatants, and proclaims, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am sit down with my Father in his throne!"

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SERMON DCLX.

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AUTUMNAL LESSONS;* OR, THE LEAF AN EMBLEM OF MAN.

"We all do fade as a leaf."—ISAIAH lxiv. 6.

THE temples, tombs, and other monuments of Egypt are covered with figurative writing, in which the symbols employed bear some resemblance to the objects they represent.

In like manner, the works of God may be regarded as sacred and emblematical characters, much more important to understand, and much easier to decipher than the hieroglyphical language of antiquity. The setting sun, the waning moon, the distant stars, the stormy clouds, the unbroken sky, have all their peculiar and instructive meaning. The instincts and habits of the brute creation, the wonders of the deep, the changes of the seasons, and the various phenomena of vegetable life, are eloquently expressive of some spiritual lesson or moral truth.

Look abroad, for instance, at the change which so lately has taken place in the face of nature—a change from the graceful and luxuriant forms of the summer season, to the increasing desolation and decay of autumn. Stripped of their foliage, instead of refreshing shade, the trees present nothing to us now but naked branches, while the ground, so recently adorned with flowers, is disfigured and overspread with mouldering leaves. This change, we are admonished in the text, bears a resemblance to that experienced by ourselves—"we all do fade as a leaf," so that one of the most familiar objects, one which passes through

* Preached in St. Philip's Church, Philadelphia, Nov. 23, 1845.

all its stages before our eyes, is an emblem of man. Take the withered thing then into your hands, my brethren, and remember *how differently these leaves appear now from what they did formerly.*

1. Dried up, and broken into fragments, their structure is destroyed, and their beauty marred; but they were, within our recollection, green and flourishing. We delighted in their shade, we admired their forms, and were amazed by the wisdom displayed in their construction. But is the difference between man, as he appears in youth and old age, less remarkable? The hand of time has not more completely obliterated from this withered leaf every trace of its former elegance, than it has taken away from the man of four score years, every vestige of youthful beauty. It has unnerved his arm, dimmed his eye, palsied his step, and furrowed his countenance; but in other days he was like the leaf in its greenness, graceful, sprightly, and animated. Which of the works of God can compare with man? He is not only in physical structure more astonishing, but he has a soul—a spiritual, immaterial, and immortal being. Other things were made by the *hand* of God, but it was moulded in the image of God, and by the breath of God.

Other things were shaped into material modifications of grace and beauty, but it was garnished with the excellences of its maker, and made lustrously reflective of the divine perfections; and though sin has injured it has not destroyed its excellence, for as when wandering among the ruins of ancient grandeur your eye rests now on the richly sculptured frieze, and now on the living marble, so in the intellectual and moral powers of the human soul may still be traced some faint lines of its original greatness.

But if this leaf be an emblem of man in respect to its former beauty, so likewise on account of *its progressive growth.* It was concealed, in the first place, within a little bud; by the genial influence of spring, it was enabled to escape from this imprisonment, and after passing through its various stages, to attain maturity. In the same way man first makes his appearance as a babe, and shielded by the same kind providence that preserves the leaf, he proceeds from infancy to childhood, from childhood to youth, and from youth to manhood.

2. But the object we are considering is *frail* as well as beautiful. Its slender stalk and flimsy covering afford scarcely more protection than the spider's web or an insect's wing. This leaf has been the sport of casualties ever since its first expansion—the plaything of the wind and storm—a few sunny days its only rest—until now, when unable any longer to retain its hold, it has fallen to the ground and withered. But is our own frailty, my hearers, any less affecting? Are we not *born* so helpless as to be equally unable to express our wants or make known our suffer-

ings? Is not our life suspended then, as it were, by a single thread, which the many hands of disease too often snap, and which not even maternal care can always preserve? But if we escape destruction in the bud, still "in the midst of life we are in death,"—keen winds and chilling frosts are as fatal sometimes to man in his strength as to the leaf in its verdure, carrying him suddenly to an untimely grave, and depriving him at once of life and beauty. Thus "man" not only "cometh up, but is cut down like a flower." And even should he reach the appointed limit of human existence, he must pass through many strange and *painful vicissitudes*. He must be exposed, like this leaf, to all sorts of weather—the sunshine of joy, and the gloom of grief—the light of pleasure, and the darkness of pain—the serenity of contentment and the storms of affliction. Nothing can be more unstable than our present condition. Even in the neighborhood where we dwell there are continual changes. Returning to it after a short absence, the persons with whom we are so familiar are no longer seen. Other faces meet us in the street, other forms in the church. We find the family circle broken up, and our dearest friends scattered over the face of the earth. In the meanwhile, we ourselves have been the sport of circumstances, and in prosecuting the business of life, have experienced the mutability of its affairs. Prosperity and adversity, dangers and escapes, friendships and enmities, feasts and funerals have made up the medley catalogue of our experience.

Many of my hearers move at present in scenes widely different from those in which they passed their earlier days; the home of their childhood, endeared to them by so many tender recollections, has been left behind—the guardians of their infancy have been taken away—the companions of their youth have disappeared, and they have been changing ever since their abodes, their acquaintances, and their occupations. There are those here, perhaps, who have joined in the dance, and wept at the grave; who have shrouded the dead, and laughed with the living; who have reveled with the rich and starved with the poor. Thus the positions in which we may be thrown are so inconsistent; the scenes in which we act so diverse; the employments in which we engage so opposite, that we may well hold up to you this faded leaf and say, that it was never more the tempest tossed thing, which could not rest, than is man the creature of change and circumstance.

3. But, again, the leaf is not only a beautiful and a frail, but a *perishable* object. "We all do fade as a leaf." As the trees renew their foliage every year, so the world every generation its inhabitants; and if it were not that one generation springs up before another passes away and so gives to the world the appearance of being always full, it would be more observable.

If it were possible for the tree of life, like the tree of nature,

to be nearly stripped of its leaves, they who remained would be more forcibly reminded of their own mortality; but because as fast as one man falls another rises, we overlook the general decay that is going on. But where, I would ask, are the millions who, in their respective ages, filled the places which others occupy? Where are the inhabitants of those powerful kingdoms, those magnificent cities, which have left nothing but their names to record? Thy merchants, oh Tyre! Thy princes, oh Babel! Thy people, oh Nineveh—which were "like the sands upon the seashore for multitude?" Where are those enterprising men who brought to these shores civil and religious freedom, and laid the foundation of our fame and greatness? Where, but with the leaves of other autumns, reduced to ashes, and returned to dust? But, indeed, the perpetually changing aspect of society before our eyes is still more affecting. The invasion by death of our domestic circles, the frequent funerals in our streets, bearing to the grave our friends, our relatives, and fellow-citizens, and above all, the burial place itself—crowded, as it is, with the memorials of those whom we once knew—knew, when they were as busy and as active as ourselves—knew, to have been as sanguine and as industrious as we are—these say to us, in language that cannot be mistaken, "We all do fade as a leaf."

And it does aggravate the force of this comparison, when we discover the beginnings of decay within *ourselves*, when we find that a change is taken place in us, resembling that which takes place every autumn in the leaves. To young persons, indeed, this remark may seem inapplicable, but they should reflect that, as many circumstances occasion the fading of the leaf besides time, so, many accidents may occasion the decay of strength besides age—that as sudden changes of temperature will often bring the leaf to the ground long before the frost of autumn, so, unforeseen casualties will often bring a man to the grave long before he becomes old. They should consider that, although not as yet conscious of any decline within themselves, they are at any rate approaching every day nearer to the time when that decline begins. But, in such as are no longer young, it has already commenced. They know, though perhaps it is little apparent to others, that they have experienced a change: that they are neither so hardy in body, so vigorous in mind, nor so retentive in memory as they once were—they are beginning to fade. And others are still more unequivocally admonished of the truth of the text, for when the sap of life flows sluggishly and the eyes grow dim, when the ears become heavy and the taste obtuse, when the shriveled features and the emaciated limbs tell of the absorption of the juices of existence, then, surely, we may point to this withered leaf and say, "Thus we all do fade."

There is much need, my brethren, that we be habitually reminded of these things, for, in truth, we live in almost constant

forgetfulness of them; and it was, perhaps, to catch our wandering eye that the Creator has written on the trees, inscribed on the ground, and scattered in the field so many emblems of our mortality. The fleeting flower, the fading grass, the impetuous flood, the transient sleep, and "the vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away," are each of them pointed to in the Word of God as singularly expressive of human frailty. And at this season when the hectic flush which so lately was seen on the face of nature, in the deep red gorgeousness of autumnal foliage, has passed away, we

> "See the leaves around us falling,
> Dry and withered to the ground:
> Thus to thoughtless mortals calling,
> In a sad and solemn sound."

But the misfortune is, brethren, that, in the face of the evidence of our own senses, and in opposition to the conviction of our reason, we learn no wisdom from these instructions. We see the leaves fade, without being reminded by it that we are fading ourselves. The men of this world are so busy, they form such an animating spectacle, such a bustling crowd, the thought never occurs to us that they are not the same crowd who thronged the streets some years ago, nor the same who will throng the streets some years hence. The dead are buried out of our sight; the dying are languishing on their beds; the infirm and the aged are shut up in their habitations; our eyes rest upon little else than what is green and flourishing, and so we forget that what is faded now was green formerly, and that what is flourishing now will fade speedily. But admitting that the proofs of this are too evident to escape observation, is it not true that we contrive to persuade ourselves that what happens to others will not happen to us? That we are exempted from the law which consigns others to the grave, so that, in the house of mourning and the chamber of death, instead of saying to ourselves, "The lot of my departed friend will soon be mine," we lament death as *his* misfortune, but never likely to become *ours;* we speak of him as having been subjected to a hard fate, which *we*, however, never expect to share.

And as men are too apt to shut their eyes in this manner to the conclusion of life, so are they loth to believe that it is hastening away.

Although every day they live abstracts something from the sum total of their existence, and although those daily abstracts have been going on for years, it never occurs to them that their lives, in consequence, have diminished in length. They seem not to regard life as a sum of gold, which every purchase lessens, until at last it is all expended, but as a mine which no expenditure can diminish and no prodigality can exhaust. They do not seem to regard life as a journey, which becomes shorter and shorter by prosecution, but as a road upon which a person may

travel, and be always as far from the end as when he first set out. You may have observed that the schemes which men form at forty years of age, are not more limited on that account. Whatever disappointment they may fear from other causes, and whatever precautions they may take to prevent failure, they never think of abridging their views because of the uncertainty of human life. They have attained an age which is an important deduction from the longest term allotted to man, and yet they give no weight to that in their calculations. Now when you consider that the average duration of human life is well ascertained, such conduct is like that of a man who, having provision for seven days, without any possibility for procuring more, should persuade himself that he had sustenance for an indefinite period, and act accordingly. And if such is the conduct of men in the prime of life, what shall we think of those who, although they are bowed down with the infirmities of age, try to flatter themselves that they are still young; who make themselves ridiculous by affecting the dress and tone of the youthful, and to whom you can give no greater offence than to insinuate that they are far in the decline of life! Melancholy, indeed, are these evidences of the insensibility of man to his present condition, but more melancholy because exhibited in the face of such pathetic proofs of it. As many years as have passed over your heads, as many autumns as you have seen come and go, as many leaves as you have seen fall, so many times have you been warned, that "we all do fade as a leaf." As many infirmities as you have felt in yourselves, as many signs of decay as you have observed in others, as many friends as you have followed to the grave, so many times you have been warned that "we all do fade as a leaf." The leaf broken from its parent stem, whilst yet green, should have reminded some of you of the dismemberments they have witnessed in their own circle, of the soft eyes of childhood which they have seen closed, of the blooming cheek of youth which they have seen whiten, and of the strong arm of manhood which they have seen paralyzed. Yes, during the year which is hurrying to its close, other flowers than those of the field have faded, other leaves than those of the forest have fallen—the bright and beautiful of men have dropped from the parent tree, and thousands, like the woods, have been rendered leafless. What then must be the infatuation of those, who in the face of evidence like this that "we all do fade," persist in believing themselves to be unfading. Strong indeed must be the delusion which no argument can break—no bereavement dissolve, no sermon dispel, no warning overcome. It is not that we are naturally indifferent about the future. Men are continually providing against the future, laying up money for their future wants and laying out plans for future enjoyments. Their anxieties, their toil, their speculations, their hopes, are all looking forward. But it is the future decay, the future death, the future judgment which they disregard.

This indifference to their highest interests, this apathy so injurious to themselves and so inconsistent with their usual habits, convinces me that we are all under a sort of enchantment, and that the spell cannot be broken by anything short of a divine power. Otherwise, how could it be possible for men to see everything around them going to ruin, and to feel the worm gradually devouring their own strength, without forseeing and preparing for their latter end?

How could "all men think all mortal but themselves," if it were not that the god of this world had blinded their eyes in order to make them his certain prey. I am convinced, then, that nothing short of divine power—that no weaker influence than heavenly grace—that no agent inferior to the Holy Ghost can break the spell and dissolve the incantations beneath which we lie. Nature and revelation point, indeed, to the fallen foliage which now lies scattered around your dwellings, and say in a solemn tone, "thus you fade;" but as this admonition has proved unavailing in years past, so it will prove, I am persuaded, in years to come, unless the God of nature and revelation bring it home irresistibly to the human heart. We have heard men talk sentimentally enough of the fallen leaf, of its striking analogies, its affecting lessons, and wholesome warnings. We have seen men weep bitterly enough over the body and the grave of a departed friend. But where is the evidence that this is real? We see it not. Sentiment is nothing, and the lessons of affliction are soon forgotten. What we want, is not to be persuaded that the leaf fades, or that our friends fade, but that *we are fading ourselves*. I admit that it is a gloomy fact; but when the neglect of a gloomy fact is dangerous, we must look it in the face. If there were any antidote against disease, any refuge from decay, any escape from death, it would be different—but since they are inevitable, inconsideration can only make them come upon us unawares. And do you ask me what danger will arise from neglecting this fact? I answer that there is the death of the soul as well as the death of the body, and that he who is unprepared for the first death, will be sure of incurring the second. Not, as it has been well observed, "not a death which consists in the extinction of consciousness, for the consciousness of guilt will keep by us forever—not a death that implies the cessation of feeling, for that feeling will continue to the last, though the feeling of intensest suffering—not a death by which all sense of God will be expunged, for the sense of God's offended countenance will prey upon us and agonize us forever," but a living death, my hearers, an endless death, which the poor soul shall have as little prospect of escaping after the lapse of ages as it had at first. This is the danger, and the melancholy thing *is*—not that we must die and return to dust, but that, forgetting that fact, we trifle away the short space assigned us to prepare. The flowers, so to speak,

have been made to fade, and the leaves have been made to fall, and the grass has been made to wither in order that we might be reminded every autumn, that we have so much less time to prepare for eternity. And how are you to do this? In the first place by *recovering the image you have lost.* This leaf can never regain its beauty, but the soul of man which was created in the image of God, can be renewed. Sin has defaced the image—disobedience has marred the resemblance, but there is such a thing as being made a new creature—there is such a thing as being "created anew in Christ Jesus"—there is such a thing as obtaining, through faith, an imputed righteousness and a real sanctification, and if you will be transplanted from this wilderness world into the paradise of God, you must, by being spiritually transformed, recover that image which has been lost through sin, and so be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. I acknowledge that you have no strength of yourselves to do this. Spiritually as well as physically, this leaf is an emblem of your weakness; but as God preserved the leaf upon the tree, until it had fulfilled the end of its existence, so, if you are in earnest about your salvation, he will secure its accomplishment. But if you go about the work in dependence upon anything less than divine strength, you will fall, be assured, to the ground and perish.

Again, you must have the life of God in the soul, and "this is life eternal to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent." We are, indeed, poor dying creatures; "all flesh indeed is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field." But if you have Jesus as your Saviour, your body will rise again—"if it be sown in corruption, it will be raised in incorruption; if it be sown in dishonor, it will be raised in glory; if it be sown in weakness, it will be raised in power; if it be sown a natural body, it will be raised a spiritual body." There is implanted in the child of God an immortal principle, an imperishable seed! United to Christ as his head, death cannot dissolve the union! It may dissolve, and does, all earthly relations—husbands and wives, parents and children, brethren and sisters must say farewell. But the union of the believer to his Lord is indissoluble; his present body being earthly and mortal must die; it has in it the very element of dissolution, sin—and who would not be freed from sin, although he must die to obtain his freedom? But this body Christ "shall change and make like unto his glorious body according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." And thus the believer, secure of immortality, both in body and soul, has nothing to fear either from death or the grave. He can challenge the first with, "Oh! death, where is thy sting?"—he can smile at the last with, "Oh! grave, where is thy victory?" and he can triumph over all with, "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ."

And now, my hearers, will you allow me to ask, then, what preparation you have made for death? Have you experienced the beginning of God's work in the soul of man in your souls? Have you been counseled by the decay of nature to prepare for your own decay; to seek after that new birth and that sanctification which can alone fortify you against the fear of death, and take away the terrors of the grave? If not, what time have you to lose? "We all do fade as a leaf."

Let not nature, then, hold up in vain this emblem of mortality. She is now burying her fair sons and daughters and summons you to the funeral. May the affecting spectacle lead you to seek an interest in Him who "is the resurrection and the life: in whom whosever believeth, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth shall never die."

And now, to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all praise, might, majesty and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON DCLXI.

BY REV. EDMUND NEVILLE, D.D.,

RECTOR OF ST. THOMAS' CHURCH, NEW-YORK.

THE DUTY OF THANKSGIVING.*

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name."—Ps. c. 1, 4.

The annual observance of a day of Thanksgiving to Almighty God, may now be regarded as an established custom of the American people; nor am I aware that it is adopted by any other. For the commemoration, indeed, of great political-events all countries have days set apart in their respective calendars, but a day of thanksgiving is our peculiar and honorable characteristic among the nations. How solemn and affecting is the contemplation of an entire people thus offering up unitedly their acknowledgments to the Supreme Being. The public worship of Almighty God at other times is less imposing. It is associated in our minds with sectarian selfishness, party feuds and denominational animosities. Although men are so evidently sprung from a common parentage, yet such is the effect of surrounding influences, that even among the inhabitants of the same country

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we find creeds so various as almost to induce the belief that there was a separate Adam and Eve for each sect. God is accordingly worshipped on most occasions, rather as the God of mountains and plains, and rivers, than as the God of the human race. But we worship Him to-day as "the father of us all." Our common brotherhood is recognized, our common obligations are confessed, our common dependence is admitted, and our praises no longer uttered by discordant tongues, harmoniously unite in the ancient song, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise."

1. The duty of thanksgiving arises from the nature of man. It is the expression of gratitude. Suppose, my friends, that when God created Adam, he had neither given him a heart to feel, nor a tongue to speak, could he have claimed from man in such a case the language and sentiments of gratitude? He would have produced a being as incapable of acknowledging his power and goodness as the beasts which roamed the groves of paradise. But it is fortunate that it is otherwise; that man is intensely susceptible of attachment to his benefactor; that his affections respond to kindness like harpstrings to the touch; that he has feelings of admiration for the beautiful, and feelings of awe for the sublime. Being thus qualified to be grateful, that he ought to be so is sufficiently apparent, because God intimates by the nature of his gifts, how he would have them employed. The design of our affections is as plain as that of our limbs, and it would be as absurd to say that a man with a heart was not intended to feel as that a man with feet was not intended to walk. Another proof that the duty of thanksgiving arises from the nature of man, may be found in the common consent of mankind. Why do we expect it from the objects of our benevolence? From brutes it is unlooked for. The spectators were amazed when upon the Roman amphitheatre he who had extracted a thorn from a lion's foot was spared and recognized. But in man the *absence* of gratitude astonishes us as much as its *presence* in a brute, because it is in accordance with the constitution of his nature to be grateful. Even among barbarians the obligations imposed upon them by kindness are religiously observed. See how the Arab or the Indian will protect his friend! The lapse of time—the threats of enemies—the risk of life cannot make them forget his benefits. They will give all they possess to save him from the torture or the stake. And yet all this is done by the light of nature. Some nations have classed ingratitude with murder, and punished it with death. In short, there is no crime on earth more universally detested, more reluctantly confessed, or more bitterly inveighed against. "Ingratitude is monstrous," says the dramatist, and the death of Cæsar, he tells us, was caused less by the stroke of the assassin, than by the ingratitude of Brutus; for

"When the noble Cæsar saw *him* stab,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,
Quite vanquished him. Then burst his mighty heart."

2. Another truth, also, must be attended to in regard to gratitude. The warmth of its expression should always be proportioned to the amount of our obligations. The subject matter of our present thanksgivings are the mercies of God. And what kindnesses between man and man can compare with these in number and magnitude? The world literally groans beneath the burden of his gifts, and this is continually accumulating by fresh donations. They are not only conferred daily but momentarily. Every pulsation of life for example is equivalent to its original gift. We owe God therefore as many lives as we draw breaths. Every moment by preserving our life he bestows upon us the innumerable blessings which life involves. Can our gratitude be too profound or our praises of such a being too loud? There are thousands in the world, however, who return thanks for the least benefit which man bestows, and yet receive the richest gifts from their Creator without acknowledgment. So long as their benefactor is man, their gratitude rises with their obligations; but when claimed by the transcendantly higher obligations which they owe to God it falls to zero. Some say that this is owing to the fact that by the continual recurrence of his gifts they lose their force. I know that the intensity of light diminishes in proportion to its removal from the sun. I know that heat decreases as you travel from its source, but I have yet to learn that there is a point where gratitude is extinguished by the very means calculated to set it on fire.

Is gratitude blunted by the repetition of kindness between man and man, or do we not look that men who are overwhelmingly obliged, should be overwhelmingly grateful? If because God is always giving, we withhold our thanks, then the very cause of gratitude to a fellow creature is assigned for ingratitude to our Creator. Some men there are, too, in the world, who only praise God for what he is *not* always giving, for what he rarely gives, and gives to few, such as wealth and eminence. Their mercury is always at the freezing point except on the application of boiling heat. The common benefits of God, though the most important and valuable, cannot raise it an inch. Now this is unnatural. As the glass rises and rises with the heat so should the temperature of gratitude with our obligations; and that its culminating point should be the Great Being whose gifts admit of no comparison with any other, is manifest. Thanksgiving from man to man is a lower duty than thanksgiving from man to God. Whilst the feelings and affections of the heart respond to kindness from below, they should ascend to kindness from above; like the oak whose lower branches may touch the ground whilst its upper ones climb to heaven.

Among our grounds of thanksgiving are the character and perfection of God. The respect and admiration justly claimed by any being depend upon the degree in which he possesses corresponding excellence. For instance, a being with reason is entitled to more regard than an irrational animal, and a man of talent and virtue to more regard than a dunce or profligate. Every one, in short, has a right to that place in our esteem which he deserves. Now, on this ground, we cannot without injustice withhold from God our highest praises and warmest affections. As a divine being, He is a being of superior nature to all others, for that nature belongs to God alone. The nature of man is common to the human race: the nature of angels is shared by the heavenly host; but the nature of God is peculiar to himself. Beside himself, all other beings are finite, created, dependent, and mutable. We owe to Him on this account, therefore, the whole honor, and the undivided regard, which belong to the only being thus distinguished. The respect due to a reasonable being is due as much to one as to another, and must be equally divided among the human family; but that which the Divine Being claims, since there is but one, is wholly and undividably his own. In the same way, the character of God, on account of its surpassing excellence, entitle Him to our deepest reverence, and to that response of feeling and affection which its several features deserve. Its amiability deserves our love, its truth our confidence, its compassion our regard, and its justice our awe. If such qualities occasion us to exercise such feelings toward a loving, truthful, benevolent and upright man, how much more should they do so toward God, in whose character they shine with the brightest lustre, and without any mixture of infirmity? Now, the duty in which we are engaged, implies that we have such feelings, that our prayers and praises are the language suggested by his nature, as the one living and true God, and by his character, as holy, and just, and good.

The works of God are a ground of thanksgiving. Some men there are in the world who have the finest sense possible of the beautiful in art, and yet seem insensible to that of nature. They praise Canova and Thorwaldsen to the skies, but say nothing of the statuary in living marble. But these men are unjust to God, for every artist is entitled to all the credit which his works deserve. Whether the author of the works be human or divine, makes no difference. We accord to the sculptor, the painter, the writer, our applauses according to the supposed merit of their productions. Crowns have been wreathed for them, festivals have been held in their honor, eulogies have been pronounced on their genius, and books have been written in their praise. And yet all this is done in honor of those who are themselves indebted to the Almighty, for the means by which their fame has been acquired and their works accomplished. The intellect of Newton,

the hand of Phidias, the fire of Raphael, and the eloquence of Cicero, were all from God, and the praise of the wonders which they achieved is justly His. But if we applaud to the skies the works of men, with what rapturous enthusiasm and admiration should those of God be witnessed!

The most cunning contrivances of human ingenuity, the noblest triumphs of human genius, are as much beneath the grandeur, and skill, and wisdom, displayed in the works of God as man is beneath his Maker. Man can stretch a wire around the globe, and communicate with his antipodes in a moment; but can he create the subtle and mysterious fluid which conveys his message? Man can carve statues out of marble, but can he breathe into their nostrils the breath of life? Man can annihilate distance, but can he make a drop of water or a particle of dust? "Which of you," says our Lord, "by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature?" or what amounts to the same thing—can conceive how in any way the works of God may be improved? Let any man try to make that better which God pronounced very good, and his inability to originate will soon be palpable. What a prodigious grasp of mind then does it argue in the Creator of all things, that he could beget the idea of a universe, with its gorgeous assemblage of systems, and worlds; its complex laws and vast machinery. Ages passed before man could discover the law which governs the fall of atoms, and the sweep of planets; the wisdom then which originated all the physical laws of the universe, must be unspeakable. And what consummate power must the realization of these sublime ideas have demanded to produce from nothing, in such excellence that it could not be improved, *everything!* Consider, too, that the most diminutive of the works of God are as full of wonder as the greatest; that the mote in the sunbeam and the drop of water, teem as much with marvels, as the fields of space or the canopy of heaven. Reflect that even among those of his works with which we are acquainted, there is an endless diversity, so that no exact coincidence is found among individuals even of the same tribe in the animal and vegetable world.

Although there are so many plants, and animals, and men—so many that they cannot be counted, you cannot find a single pair of them without some points of dissimilarity. Whole tribes of creatures quite different from those now existing in the world have disappeared, and the process of producing and reproducing this infinitely varied and diversified succession of beings has been carried on by God from the creation of the world till now. Such thoughts, the very immensity of the subject make distracting, but they bring forcibly to our minds the adoring admiration, and love, which we owe to God. Such works as his do indeed deserve thanksgiving, and praise, and were they withheld these very walls might clap their hands, and yonder stones sing anthems to *rebuke our apathy.*

Another cause of thankfulness are "the blessings of this life," or the continued exercise in our behalf, of a watchful providence. Every being deserves our thanks in proportion to the time, and thought, and pains, which He employs for our good. Now in order to bestow upon us these blessings the wisdom, skill, power and goodness of God are continually occupied. He devotes, if I may so express myself, His time, His resources, His contrivance and His study, for our interests. Thus our preservation is owing to His incessantly warding off from us disease and accident—to His maintaining uninterruptedly the succession of seasons, the fecundity of the earth, the salubrity of the air, and that constitution of things, which to such beings as we are, if deranged for a moment, would prove fatal. This shows how busy God must be in our behalf; for that nothing may go wrong he must be everywhere and see everything. Were he to leave the helm of the great ship that he has built, for a single moment, it must go to pieces. He must not only control and direct the movements of the world, but those of the atom, because a single screw out of place in this vast machine, might be destructive. He must foresee every danger which he averts, and have a perfect knowledge of every event before it happens. And what thanks are not due to God for such sleepless regard to our interests, and unwearied exertions in our favor! What goodness to occupy himself every moment in supplying our fast recurring necessities, and in daily bestowing upon us the richest blessings.

For these alone we can never be sufficiently thankful. Unbroken health, without which, though possessing all things, we enjoy nothing. Oh, it must be a cold and withered heart that lies within that man's breast who does not praise God for the unimpaired energies of his frame, notwithstanding, perhaps, pernicious dissipations and wearing toils. "Strange" indeed is it that under such circumstances, "a harp of ten thousand strings should keep in tune so long." There is a sound mind without which nature would be a blank. There are not only the necessaries of life, but the feasts, which for our taste, our imagination, our curiosity, and our reason, are everywhere spread in the works of God. There are also home, that "nest of delights," and all the sweets of domestic happiness. But thousands of volumes and ten thousand times ten thousand tongues could not exhaust the catalogue! What affecting passages, my hearers, in each one's history, would such a recapitulation involve! What tales of hair-breadth escapes, singular recoveries, and special interpositions! Some God has rescued from dangers, some he has snatched from death, and some he has saved from ruin. Many have struggled hard with adversity, who are now prosperous, and many have acquired a handsome competence, who were once poor.

"The blessings of this life" will remind numbers of the up-hill part of its journey, and make them think perhaps with tears of the

humiliations, and hardships of the past, but it will remind them also, and I trust make them unfeignedly thankful for the happy change which they have since experienced. All the praises which we owe to God for these blessings, His creatures, were they to unite as one man in the attempt, could never render. If we extol the charity which relieves one object, how can we sufficiently praise Him, who "openeth his hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing? If we praise the benefactor who merely shows kindness to his friends, what admiration is due to him who feeds his enemies and "makes his sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good?" If we applaud the benevolence which visits prisons, and improves the condition of the insane, how can we sufficiently applaud him who liberates and restores those who are enslaved and maddened by sin? If no praises are thought too great for the patriot who sacrifices his possessions for his country's good, what praises does He deserve who "gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Our present thanksgivings, however, are not only offered for our individual, but national mercies. "The good that men do" is not always "buried with their bones," for the custom which we now see generally established of a public thanksgiving to Almighty God, originated with those who have long since been numbered with the dead. It will be 232 years ago on the 11th day of next month, since the first demonstration of this nature was made; by men too in an unexplored wilderness, in the midst of savages and thankful if they could obtain sufficient food to support their lives. How strange that such a practice should first take root and flourish amid the adversities and hardships of emigrant life, and that not until the lapse of two centuries when the golden harvests of autumn wave over the thousand hills and valleys of the land should the noble example of the Puritans be imitated, and anything like a national acknowledgment of the goodness of God be offered. What nation is more indebted than this to God's bounty? Look at its rapid progress which makes the whole world stretch out its hands in wonder! See the extent of its commerce, the success of its manufactures, the amount of its revenues, the numbers, enterprise and intelligence of its people! Look at its fruitful fields, and the rich profusion of treasures with which it abounds! Its hills are studded with flocks, its rivers are freighted with gold, and its valleys are standing thick with corn. Contrast this with the spectacle which comparatively a few years ago it presented, when but a sparse and widely scattered population covered the land; when the forests of the West were still unentered and its prairies untrodden, when the deer roamed where cities stand and Indians ambushed where cattle graze. Contrast all this with the condition of other countries, where the streets are crowded with the ragged and the poor,

and the towns soiled with filth and wretchedness; where the avenues to distinction are closed to the indigent, and where honest poverty is esteemed a crime; where armies are marshalling for the battle, and where the cormorants of war plume their wings. Peace is ours with all its attendant blessings.

And "what shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits?" Oh, never, never can we adequately repay His mercies; but be it ours to render unto Him the undivided affection of our hearts and the unqualified obedience of our lives—be it ours, by doing good to others, to show our appreciation of His mercies to ourselves. If as a country or as individuals we would render in any degree according to the benefits we have received from God, we must honor His laws, reverence His word, and practice His precepts. Upon this depend both the welfare of the man and the endurance of the republic. Under such auspices anarchy and misrule shall never subvert our institutions, but preserved by the restorative and antiseptic powers of religion, they shall last whilst the sun and moon endure, for it is written that "Righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people."

SERMON DCLXII.

BY REV. EMERSON DAVIS, D.D.

WESTFIELD, MASS.

GOD STIRS UP HIS PEOPLE.

"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him."—DEUT. xxxii. 11, 12.

IMPORTANT truths are often very pleasantly and forcibly illustrated by familiar facts in natural history. The righteous are said to be bold as a lion, to grow like the cedar, and to flourish like the lily. Like the bee they gather in summer, and like the ant lay up food in the time of harvest. The wicked are compared to the heath in the desert, to the deaf adder that stoppeth his ear, to the bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, and to the corn that springs up in the thin soil overlaying the surface of the rock.

The eagle being a large and powerful bird, attracts the attention of men in every country where it is found, and is often referred to by inspired as well as uninspired writers to illustrate important truths. This bird lives to the age of forty or fifty, and sometimes even to a hundred years. It sheds its feathers in the beginning of the spring, after which it is supposed to renew its

strength, and even when old, it annually puts on the appearance of a young eagle. David alludes to this to illustrate the effect of God's mercy to those who love him: "He satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." This bird was supposed to fly higher than any other; it dwells on high mountains and in solitary places; hence Job says: "The eagle soars and maketh his nest on high; the rock is the place of his habitation, he dwells on the crag, the place of strength." Isaiah speaks of the soul, renovated and refreshed by divine influence, as renewing its strength, and mounting up with wings as eagles. The protection which God extended to the Israelites, when he delivered them from the power of Pharaoh, is illustrated by what the eagle does for its young, when it takes them upon its back, and removes them beyond the reach of enemies. "Ye have seen," says Jehovah, "what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you, as on eagles wings, and brought you to myself."

The fact that God teaches his people by his providence, breaks up their old habits, and puts them upon a new course, is illustrated by an allusion to another habit of the eagle. In order to teach her young to fly, she stirs up the nest, makes it uncomfortable, crowds one out upon the branch, flutters around it, as if to show it how to use its wings, sometimes takes it upon her back, and flying a short distance, darts from under it, and obliges it to try its own wings. She keeps near it, however, and if it begins to falter, takes it again upon her wings, and bears it to a place of rest. So, it is said, the Lord dealeth with his people.

The truth illustrated is this—*God will have his people act agreeably to the promptings of the spirit of true piety.* The eagle was made to fly, to go abroad at a proper age to procure the means of its own support, and not permitted to live and die in its nest. God renews the hearts of his people, infuses into them a spirit of true piety, the natural prompting of which is to act in obedience to God's requirements. The new born soul is fitted to serve God, and, by so doing to grow in grace, and to become more assimilated to perfect purity. But still, through the influence of old habits of sin, and of things seen and temporal, Christians often settle down in a state of spiritual indolence. They become conformed to the world, live like the men of the world, and are at ease in Zion. The Lord stirs them up, makes their condition uncomfortable, puts them upon doing what he requires, and obliges them to exercise the graces of the Christian.

In pursuing this subject I remark—

I. It is God's purpose that his people shall obey him, that they shall act out the spirit of piety that exists in their hearts, and that they shall make it manifest that they have a spirit which is not of this world. Among those who profess to be Christians,

there are doubtless many who are Christians only in name. He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither are all real Israelites who are so called. Christian charity does not require us to believe that every one is a true disciple of Christ who professes to be. We are to regard those only as heirs of eternal life who bring forth the fruits of righteousness.

There are also many who bear the Christian name that run well for a season. They are sometimes hot and sometimes cold; they bear a little fruit, and then stop yielding it so long that we despair of ever seeing more; they are so irregular and inconstant that we cannot avoid entertaining some fears respecting them. If we see them when the fruit is on, we have no doubt of the reality of their piety; but if we should meet them for the first time, when barren and fruitless, we should not suppose them to be Christians; we might be surprised to learn that they have a place in the visible church. There may be nothing immoral in their external conduct, but the spirit of worldliness is so prevalent in their conversation and conduct, that we judge them to be persons who are still in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity.

There are others who are more consistent, steadfast, and uniform. They bear some fruit every month—their light shines more constantly though not always equally bright; their faces are heavenward, and they are reaching forth to things before; they sometimes slip or stumble, but soon recover, and walk more circumspectly.

In every church there may be found the three classes above described; but I am sorry to say the number of the last appears to be much the smallest. There is no church as a whole, nor none the majority of which approaches very near to what God would have them. He has a work for each to perform, the doing of which is needful to develop and strengthen their Christian graces. It is His will they should do this work for their personal benefit, as well as for the general advancement of piety in the world. He would have those who bear the Christian name, and remain at ease like the young eagle in its nest, "soar to reach eternal joys;" he would have those who, like fire-flies, emit a flash of light and are then in the dark, shine with a constant and increasing light; those who are most consistent he would have on their guard, lest, by their stumbling, they should bring a reproach on Christianity. Though we find different classes of professing Christians in each branch of the church on earth, we shall not find this diversity in the general assembly and church of the first born in heaven. There they are and ever will be emphatically all one in Christ Jesus. They have one and the same spirit, see eye to eye, and while in the world could say—

"Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares."

God does not require a few to be holy and devoted to his service, and permit others to be conformed to the world. He does not impose upon one the duty of following the Lord fully, and allow others to follow Him afar off. It is His will that every disciple of the Saviour should be even better than I have represented them to be. He calls upon every one to be steadfast, immovable, and to abound in the work of the Lord. He would have you, my hearers, walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, that "ye be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation;" that you "set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth;" that you lay aside every weight, and the sin that easily besets you; that you have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; that you provide things honest in the sight of all men; that you be kindly affectioned one toward another, ready to confess your own faults, and to forgive those that trespass against you; and that you practice self-denial, count all things but loss to win Christ, and do good to all men as you have opportunity. These things are required of all who profess to be the disciples of Christ, whether young or old, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, or have many wordly cares or few. Every one who would hear the Judge say, "Well done good and faithful servant," must be a good and faithful servant while he lives. It is not enough to have a name to live while you are dead, nor to run well occasionally, and for a short time: you must endure unto the end.

Such is the will of Him, my Christian friends, who has called you, as you trust, out of darkness into marvellous light. But you are remiss in duty; even the better class of Christians do many things which they ought not, and omit to do many things positively required.

I remark—

II. That God often stirs up his people even as an eagle stirreth up her nest, and fluttereth over her young. He brings influences to bear upon them, which result in making them more faithful and diligent in his service. He will not suffer those who have been renewed by his spirit, and in whose hearts love to him has been shed abroad, to settle down in a state of long-continued sloth. He will bring influences to bear upon them, that will as surely call into exercise the principle of spiritual life in the soul, as the approach of a magnet will produce motion among the filings of iron. If a professed disciple of Christ remains unmoved by these influences, it affords presumptive evidence that the principle of piety does not exist in the heart. If the young eagle, when the nest is stirred up, remains inactive; if, when pushed out upon the limb of the tree, it does not cling to it; if, when taken upon the parent's back, it rolls off; or if, when thrown from the nest, it does not spread its wings, it is a sign that it is dead. In like

manner, if a professor of religion remains unmoved, while means are employed to call into exercise the graces of the spirit, the conclusion is that he is dead in trespasses and sins.

God stirs up his people in various ways. He has a variety of means, which he employs for the purpose of quickening and animating them to run, with increased alacrity, the Christian race.

He employs for this purpose the teachings of his Word. He brings truth to bear upon the conscience. In this way he stirred up David. He sent to him Nathan, the prophet, who, having enlightened his mind, and opened an avenue to his heart, made that thrilling appeal to his conscience, "Thou art the man," which led to the confession, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." Whenever you open your Bible, God speaks to you of duties to be performed, and of sins to be forsaken. He points you to heights to be reached, and to depths to be shunned. You can hardly read a chapter, in any proper frame of mind, without having your spirit stirred within you, or without being led to resolve to serve God more faithfully.

Another means which God employs for stirring up his people is the preaching of the gospel. He sends the living teacher—a man of like passions with yourself—to unfold the truths of his Word, and to enforce the practical duties it requires. If you attend public worship with any proper sense of its design, and especially if there be in your hearts a particle of vital godliness, it will be touched, and you will have some sense of your short comings, you will form some new resolutions, or, to say the least, you will be kept from becoming more inanimate. Often the preaching of the gospel is the instrument of stirring up the disciples of Christ to engage more actively in the duties of religion, and in efforts to promote their growth in grace.

Another means which God employs for stirring up his people is the example of other Christians. You see or hear how they live and how they are blessed, and it throws over you a healthful influence. You see it is possible for one in the condition in which you are to serve the Lord better than you have done. You feel condemned for living at so poor a rate. You take shame to yourself when you see others maintaining a much closer walk with God than you do; and when you perceive that the sun of righteousness shines upon them, it awakens in your mind a sense of your ill-desert, makes you dissatified with yourself; it leads you to seek for pardoning mercy, and a larger measure of divine influence.

In order to stir you up you have a narrative of the life of Christ, whom you are required to imitate in all his imitable perfections. You have also, an account of the faith of Abraham, of the meekness of Moses, of the patience of Job, of the earnestness and zeal of Paul, of the love of John, of the benevolence of the

poor widow, of the repentance of Peter, and of the humility of the woman who washed the Saviour's feet with her tears.

In the lives of those who have lived in later times, you find much that is fitted to provoke you to love and good works. In Martin Luther and John Knox, and in others of those days, you behold stirring examples of Christian boldness; and in the lives and deaths of the martyrs, you see what it is to count not your lives dear unto you, and have an exemplification of that love that is stronger than death. From the memoirs of Brainard and Martyn you learn the nature of self-denial; and by such men as Harlan Page, you are taught how much one can do for promoting the cause of Christ while engaged in the ordinary pursuits of business. Thus, by the example of the living and the dead, God is seeking to stir you up, and to urge you onward in the way to heaven. If, while you gaze at these examples of fervid piety, your souls are unmoved and untouched with a desire to do likewise you have reason to fear you are spiritually dead; that there is not even a small germ of spiritual life in your souls.

God furthermore stirs up his people by his providential dispensations, both merciful and afflictive. Christians are often drawn away by their love of this present world. The glitter of gold captivates and allures them from the path of life. They become so eager in the pursuit of filthy lucre, that the ordinary means of stirring them up, and of reclaiming them, are ineffectual. But they must be awakened, and retrace their steps, or be lost. Sometimes the flames kindle upon their possessions, their debtors become bankrupt, their ships founder at sea, and their treasures take to themselves wings and fly away. Their eyes are opened, and their hearts are made to feel that a treasure in heaven is worth more than all the gold that was ever coined. Then to the shining realms above, they once more "stretch their hands and glance their eyes."

Sometimes the professed disciple is visited with bodily infirmity; his strength is weakened in the way; he is unable to pursue his money-getting avocation; and is forced, it may be to expend what he has accumulated in endeavoring to regain his health. He is brought, at length to feel that nothing is so desirable as the favor and friendship of his Father in heaven. With Agur he begins to pray, "Give me neither poverty nor riches," but "feed me with food convenient for me."

Sometimes death enters his dwelling, stirs up the whole household, and fills the survivors with deep sorrow as they behold one of their number torn from them, and "in his narrow cell for ever laid."

In these and other ways God is continually stirring up his people. He brings these influences to bear upon individuals and churches. If any begin to decline from the right way of the Lord, they are followed with warnings and with invitations: if

these avail nothing, then come trials, chastisements, and afflictions. God will in some way arouse those who have any spiritual life in their souls. If the hearts of any grow hard under these influences, there is reason to fear they will die in their sins.

Means of some kind, my friends, are often employed to stir you up to live as becomes the disciples of Christ. God says to you, "It is high time to awake out of sleep." He is even calling upon you to remember your covenant vows, to consider your ways, and turn your feet to his testimonies. If you have any true love to Christ, any of the spirit and temper of the gospel, you will hear his words, you will be moved by the means he employs: your hearts will be melted, and you will humble yourselves before him. If you have only a name to live, or are dead, you will probably remain unmoved, or sink to a lower depth.

As the eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings and teaches them to do the work of eagles, so God stirreth up his people, teaches them his mind and will, and uses means to induce them to live and act as becomes the disciples of Christ.

SERMON DCLXIII.

BY REV. E. CARPENTER,

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PRINCIPLES OF CONSTANT OBEDIENCE.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."—1 Cor. xv. 58.

The work of the Lord, in doing which we are called upon to be steadfast, is the duty which God requires of man in all the obligations of piety, faith, and virtue; the practice of true religion as pointed out by the joint instruction of natural conscience and revelation. To be steadfast is to perform the task assigned us of following Christ, growing in grace, and working out our eternal salvation with unabating ardor, firmness, and diligence, in all the extent of well-doing. It is to hold our integrity fast to the end, in contradistinction to some professing Christians, who seem at times to feel and act according to the spirit of the Gospel, but often yield to the corruption of the heart, or the power of temptation; and who, amid the occupations and cares of life, grow weary in well-doing, from the discouragements they frequently meet with; or are irresolute in the service of religion, and unstable in the practice of holiness.

But we are not merely to *continue*, we are also to *abound* in the work of the Lord; that is, to be constantly making progress in holiness and increasing in the fruits of righteousness, by adding grace to grace, and strength to strength, in the life of God; by giving all diligence, so as to make our calling and election sure. For righteousness is likened to a seed sown in the heart, which ought to

be ever growing and ripening, till it reach the size of a tree of life, shedding fruits of immortality. It is a talent given us to improve in various measures of spiritual profit. It is a spark of heavenly fire which is to burn within us till it influence the whole soul with the pure ardor of all divine and moral excellence. If man, in these respects, grow not in righteousness, nor advance towards perfection, he is called the barren fig-tree, which will be cut down; he is the unprofitable servant whom his Lord, at his coming, will not approve; he is insensible to virtue, dead to godliness, and utterly unqualified for the joys of heaven. A true Christian must have the same mind as Christ. He ought to be grounded and confirmed in all the principles of the gospel. According to the expressive language of Scripture, Christ shall dwell in his heart as his life, and the spring of his whole conduct.

Supposing, then, the same spirit in us which was also in Jesus, and setting before us the exalted prospect of a glorious issue to all our labors in the work of the Lord, let us inquire by divine grace into *those principles of mind which are the foundation of being steadfast and always abounding in the work of the Lord.*

I. The first principle of steadfast and abounding righteousness is a constant sense of *the obligation of the divine law.* He who truly partakes of the spirit of Jesus Christ is formed anew to better sentiments. Placed in the light of the divine fellowship, he looks on sin as moral darkness; he regards the will of God as the indispensable law of what is right, and as the instrument of his own happiness. And he feels himself bound by the strictest ties to the unceasing obedience and imitation of Christ, who, although not originally bound to obey, voluntarily subjected himself to the law, that he might illustrate to his people the beauty and excellence and indispensable obligation of obedience. Thus the Christian, in all his conduct, acts agreeably to the dictates of religion. Though influenced by pride, the security, or the indifference of the worldly spirit, he devotes his powers to God who gave them, and more and more abounds in goodness. Would you, then, maintain your integrity, and grow in righteousness? At all times feel the supreme and indispensable obligation of the divine law. The principles which men devise are weak and unstable, like their authors, and varying with the changes of interest, fashion, and humor, which give them birth. But that which I now recommend partakes of the energy and immutability that are the chief characters of the divine nature from which it flows. It is pure as heaven, strong as Zion, and lasting as moral obligation. It is thus that religion and virtue are indissolubly connected. To break them asunder, as some have impiously attempted to do, is to tear from religion whatever is amiable in the human heart—to sap the foundation at once of morals and of social happiness; and, in the vain presumption of soaring to heaven on the wings of a barren, speculative faith, to abandon the only course of practical belief and good works, going together hand in hand, which God himself has pointed out as the only true and living way of conducting his people to the dwelling of immortal bliss.

II. The second principle of standing fast and growing in righteousness is that of *love.* Love is the sovereign attribute of God in relation to man. Was it not love to fill the universe with animated beings, and to pour the riches of beauty and happiness over creation. Was it not love to form man after the image of God, and to breathe into him a thinking, reasonable, immortal spirit? And is it not love that at this moment we think, and feel, and hear, and see, amidst all the enjoyment of the light of the sun, all the means of temporal being, and everything that sweetens life? Thus hath God, above all, commended his love, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the soul of man, to give it eternal glory in the heavens. His life, his doctrine, his agony, his death, his resurrection, and his intercession—all were love passing knowledge. From the sense of all this goodness, will not the man, who is not dead to every generous feeling in human nature, love the Lord his Maker and Saviour with all his heart, and soul, and strength? Will not the love of Christ constrain him? And will not the energy of this divine principle transfuse itself, from his inmost bosom, through all his conduct, so as to prove a perpetual spring of unwearied activity in well-doing? This we are told is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and to abound in

love to God and man is the means of being established, or rendered steadfast, unblamable in holiness before the Lord.

III. The third principle of unwearied steadfastness and increase in the work of the Lord is *a conviction of the evil of sin*. In this respect a good man partakes of the spirit of that holy and righteous Being who *hateth* the workers of iniquity, and with whom evil cannot dwell. He despises what is mean, and abhors what is impure, with every false and wicked way. The sentiment which I describe is, moreover, quickened by fellow-feeling with the Saviour of men, who, laying aside the form of God, gave himself up to sorrow, and suffering, and death, for sin. Now, in all cases, sympathy is a powerful spring of action; it interests the heart, and raises every power of the soul. Above all, in this concern, its whole energy is called forth to make the Christian abstain from every appearance of evil, lest, by the commission of any sin, he should crucify afresh the Son of God.

IV. Another principle of unwearied well-doing and increasing righteousness is, the conviction that *holiness is necessary* as a qualification of the Christian fellowship. The great law of communion with Christ is that of light, purity, and righteousness, in opposition to the spiritual darkness of corruption and sin. If, then, we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, that is sin —" we deceive ourselves," says the Apostle. But if we walk in light or righteousness, then we have communion with the Father and his Son; and, cherished by the rays of divine light from the Sun of righteousness, graces spring up and virtues flourish in our lives as the tender herb, with the fostering warmth and dew of heaven.

V. The last principle I will mention of holding fast our integrity, is a firm confidence in the declaration that *our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord;* that if we are steadfast, and always abounding in the work, we shall reap, through Jesus Christ, the fruit of eternal life and peace. It is the prospect of this that purifies the heart, and exalts the affections beyond the earth to things above. How animating the motive to perseverance and progress in grace, that the fruit of these things shall be peace and joy unspeakable for evermore! In this assurance the good man breathes ardently after God, and seeks the glory which is with Christ. He rises superior to the ills of life, and no obstacle discourages him from the performance of his duty, however difficult or painful it may be. In the whole discipline of purity and virtue he exercises himself; and his path shines more and more till he is adorned to mingle in the glorious hosts of heaven. The world may often repay your endeavors to do good with ingratitude and calumny; and after spending your best years in the service of men, or in quest of temporal happiness, disappointment and vexation may be all your reward. But, in the Christian life, benevolent and powerful is the Master you serve; and none who ever sought to please Him, have yet spent their labor in vain.

Such, my Christian friends, are the great principles of continuing steadfast, and always abounding in the work of the Lord; a constant sense of the obligation of the divine law; the power of love; a conviction of the evil of sin, and of the necessity of holiness; and the confidence of future retribution. By the united influence of these principles, may you be effectually prevented from ever becoming remiss in duty. Thus, while the ungodly, who refuse to be influenced by these principles, are unfruitful in good works, and have their minds lightened with vanity, till they become as the chaff, which the wind driveth away, you, on the contrary, shall be as trees planted by the rivers in the vineyard of God; you shall bring forth fruit in its season, and your leaf shall not wither; your spiritual work shall prosper; and you shall finally reach the end of all your hopes, the bliss and glory of heaven, and reap the harvest of life eternal.

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SERMON DCLXIV.

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THE BOW IN THE CLOUD.

"And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the color of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire; and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it I fell down upon my face."—EZEKIEL i. 26–29.

THERE is but one scene in nature that approximates this sublime vision of the throne of God; and he who once has looked upon that scene will ever after feel the inspiration of these symbols of the prophet.

I stood at midnight upon the brink of Niagara. No human form was nigh; no voice or step of man was heard. There rolled the everlasting flood, thundering into the abyss that seemed to swallow it, yet left it undiminished in volume or in power. Dread symbol of eternity, without beginning, without end, rolling evermore upon its unseen axis, like that living wheel of emerald flashing with eyes, with wheel revolving within wheel, "whose rings were so high that they were dreadful." There resounded evermore the thunder of that power that shakes both earth and heaven—a power that sweeps to instant destruction all that comes within its grasp. There yawned that dread abyss upon whose slippery brink trembled one poor mortal with the thought of utter impotence in this close proximity of death. Above all

stretched the firmament with its "terrible crystal," and upon its pavement of stars seemed to rest the sapphire throne. From the abyss there rose up a column towering to the sky, like the smoke of a furnace, the spray of that great agony of waters vainly seeking to regain the level they had lost. The voice of many waters, the voice of mighty thunderings, rolled the eternal anthem up to the throne of God. And yet I could not feel that such a God as nature here set forth was *mine*. I feel the awe of His power who sitteth above the floods; but should I step foot upon those floods they would sweep me to destruction. I seem to catch a glimmering of his eternity in this majestic plunge of unabated waters; but I am as a single drop of that flood, and plunging over, would vainly strive to regain the level I had lost. I look at the edge of the cataract—within a hand's breadth—and it is terrible. I look over into the abyss, and it is terrible. I hearken to the thunder of the fall, and it is terrible. I look upward to the crystal firmament, and that, too, is terrible. This God whom nature here offers me is the great and terrible God. This noise of great waters is the voice of the ALMIGHTY, and I hear in it no tone of love, no accent of mercy. That sapphire throne is the throne of Infinite Majesty; and I am but a poor, weak mortal, and cannot so much as look upon it. There is no way for *me* to rise above this chasm, above these floods, above these thunderings, to dwell with such a God. "Oh, give me Christ!" I cried—alone, aloud, upon the ear of midnight, above the roar of waters, the soul, awe-struck and terrified with a material Deity, or an almighty and eternal fate, cried, "Give me Christ, the God-man, the Creator stooping to the creature; power and majesty arrayed in love!" And suddenly upon that huge frightful column that seemed the smoke of the damned, by the rays of the full moon that then slanted athwart the flood and adown the abyss, there sprang from the depths of that abyss up even to the terrible crystal above my head, a luminous arch, as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain. The prophet's vision burst upon me. In the brightness of that bow I saw the symbol of Christ, even as the Revelator of Patmos, when uplifted by the Spirit to the door that was opened into heaven, "beheld a throne set in heaven, and one that sat upon it, and he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like to an emerald."

Not as a mere ornament to the picture, filling up the back ground with its radiant glories, is this overarching bow introduced alike by those prophets of both dispensations who were privileged with the nearest insight into heaven;—this bow is the symbol of *mercy*, and in heaven it is associated with the likeness of the Son of man upon the throne. It is the symbol of Christ's administration of grace over the world.

Sweet majesty and awful love
Sit smiling on his brow:
And all the glorious ranks above
At humble distance bow.
Archangels sound his lofty praise
Through every heavenly street,
And lay their highest honors down
Submissive at his feet.
This is the Man, th' exalted Man,
Whom we, unseen, adore.

The crowning glory of heaven is, REDEEMING MERCY UPON THE THRONE. The *bow* the symbol of mercy; the *man* the symbol of redemption; the *throne* the symbol of divine majesty and sovereignty vested in Him who rules the world with truth and grace.

Rightly to appreciate this conception of the power that is above us, let us compare it with the Transcendental or Pantheistic notion of God as an idea or an essence diffused through the universe, with the Materialistic notion of God as an eternal force or fate in nature, and with the Monotheistic notion of God as isolated both in personality and in sovereignty; and then analyze the elements of this picture of Redeeming Mercy on the throne:—"The likeness as the appearance of a man above upon the throne, and round about a brightness as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain."

I. The conception of the Deity formed by some is the idea of the Absolute, revealed in consciousness, and making itself objective through the material universe,—or an invisible impersonal essence diffused through matter everywhere in space. This notion in one form is styled *transcendental*, in that it professes to have reached the *a priori* grounds of all knowledge, thereby transcending the ordinary processes of thought, and even establishing in consciousness the identity of the objective and the subjective;—a sounding phrase that seemeth lofty, grand, transcendent, by so much as it is obscure and vague;—just as sea-fogs on the most barren coast will shape themselves into distant mountains, castles, palaces and cities. God exists in the Intellectual Intuition of the human reason, so that "none can feel God, who shares not in the Godhead;" yet this ideal, like the eternal ideas of Plato, is bodied forth in the actual as the Moral Order of the world. "God exists in consciousness; subject and object are one;" and the human mind, as said Fichte, can "create God" by bringing him objectively into consciousness! The other form of this general conception is the *pantheistic;* which makes God a subtle essence diffused through nature and animating the universe as the soul animates the body. This places God literally in every thing and makes every thing a part of God. By this theory God is incarnate in a tree as really as in a man; he is incarnate in Christ only in a higher form of manifestation than in a mineral, a

plant, or an animal. In the one form of conception the rolling flood of Niagara is the eternal thought bodying itself forth in that majestic symbol; in the other it is not a mere symbol of the Deity, but a form in which the Deity is clothed; the motion of that ceaseless tide being the life and power of the indwelling essence of the Divinity. Both forms of this conception—the transcendental and the pantheistic—deprive God of personality. Their God in nature is not a personal being making manifest his existence and his attributes through the worlds that he has made and that he governs by his will; it is a thought, a principle, an essence, a law, dwelling in and animating the physical universe as the soul is in the body. But how can the soul of man, conscious of its own distinction from the body—for if consciousness teaches us anything, it teaches us that the soul is a distinct substance from the body in and through which it acts—how can the soul thus conscious of its own distinct spirituality and its personal identity, have any affinity with this eternal abstraction called Deity, or with this impersonal essence diffused in nature? How can the soul have toward such a God a feeling of responsibility, of affection, of confidence, of gratitude, of fellowship? This eternal thought, rolling from unseen depths in the past into the abyss of the future; this awful chasm that seems to swallow up everything and to give back nothing; this stupendous wheel revolving ever-more upon its unseen axis; this animated nature whose voice is the voice of many waters as they go leaping, spouting, foaming, flashing into the depths, and send back their everlasting thunders; what is all this to a soul whose affections reach after a Being greater than itself to lean upon, to trust, to love? What to me is that animated machine men call the universe? What to me is the soul they say is seated in it as a principle of life? What is it to me that I am a part of this machine, and feel in my own motions the stirring of this universal life? Instead of bringing me nigh to God, this destroys my personal identity as it takes away his personality, and makes me but one of myriads of spindles turned by the same stupendous wheel over which the eternal thought rolls on its flood forever and forever. I whirl as a spindle spinning my brief and brittle thread, but come no nearer to the wheel, and know nothing of it but its propelling power. Standing beside this mighty flood they tell me is or represents the Deity. I see him not, I feel him not as mine; I cannot approach to Him: I can admire the emerald and sapphire hues that flash from this dread wheel of eternity, but I cannot grasp one glittering gem and call it mine; I look with awe upon the power that neither ages can exhaust nor rocks resist, but that power cares not for me. If I go one step nearer, it destroys me as an atom. I stand now in safety to look upon the flood; but once and again has it undermined this very rock, and it is undermining still. I have no pledge of safety; I quake with the thunderings from beneath; I

cannot mount to the heavens above; I cannot step upon that rolling pave of emerald; I stand here drenched and chilled with its spray; I may not advance; I dare not trust; I cannot love. Oh what to me is this animated universe, this transcendental pantheistic deity!

II. Others there are whose conception of the Deity is that of a material *force* or an eternal *fate*. As in the other view the element of thought and of self-diffusing essence is predominant, so here the element of law or will;—in the one form, materialism; in the other, fatalism; both equally remote from the conception of a personal being to admire, trust, and love. Yes, here is *law*, whether in material mechanism or in unchanging fate. Here is *will* fixed, absolute, energizing, invincible. But this is not a God in whom my soul can trust. If power be the one attribute of the Deity, then here is God as he is nowhere else in nature. What measure shall we find for this in anything that man controls? The steam-engine is man's mightiest achievement; the moving train his most expressive minister of power. Terrible, indeed, is that swift rushing force, with blaze and smoke and scream and roar, threatening with instant death whatever living thing may cross its path. And yet some fragment of rock or tree, some switch awry, or plank or rail upturned, some animal or vehicle upon the track, shall hurl to fragments this thundering, screaming messenger of death. A child may block its path and throw it into a heap of ruin. Or, if no accident befal it, how soon is its power spent when fuel and water are exhausted! But here is a power that no device of man and no catastrophe of nature can obstruct. Rocks cannot block its way nor trees deflect its current. These are but the sport of its waves. Steam is impotent against it. The vessel caught within its grasp, though it struggle, and pant, and drag, and hug the rocks, must go over into the abyss. This power, too, is never spent. You watch it till your eyes are weary, but it pauses not; you lie down to rest, but it moves on; you wake by night to hear its thunderings; you go forth at morning, and still it is there. Power, vast, measureless, irresistible, endless. It realizes to the mind the dread omnipotence of law; and the energy of a will that never falters and never tires. But such is not the conception of the Deity that brings support and comfort to the soul. If I conform to this law or keep without its range, if I bow to this will or put myself within the line of its behests, it will not harm me. But this mere negative feeling of immunity from danger will not satisfy the cravings of the soul. I am weak; will this law come to me to make me strong? I am sinful; will this law, this fate, this energy which in nature is irresistible, come to me and make me pure? I am mortal —I must die; will this law, this fate, this all-controlling power, come to raise me to life and immortality? I cannot worship na-

ked power. It awakens awe and fear, but apart from intelligence and love it cannot inspire confidence or kindle affection. The flood, the cataract, the abyss, the thunder, the terrible arch of crystal, the power that has here put forth its arm for ages without weariness and without rest, all this has in it a sublimity that subdues my soul to awe; but none of these attract my soul to love; none of these meet the aspirations of a nature all swelling with affections and hopes, and reaching for some higher Being in whom it may trust. This material force, this eternal fate, is not the God my being craves.

III. Yet another conception of the Deity is that of strict Monotheism, which makes God an absolute unit, isolated both in his personality and in his sovereignty. A great superiority of this view above those now considered is that it invests God with *personality*. It regards him neither as an abstraction of thought, a diffused essence, a physical law, a mechanical will; but as a Being having both will and affections, and with whom power and omnipresence are attributes under his own control. In the conception of such a being the mind at once perceives an object equal to its utmost capacities of thought, and adapted to its every desire and want as an intellectual creature. But can its moral necessities be equally satisfied in such a God?

First of all, how can it approach him? Mere thought, conception, is not communion—the felt intercourse of mind with mind. What can I do more than to admire and adore such a God,—as I look upon the mountain of eternal ice gleaming in awful purity, which I can never approach unto? Can I drink of no stream of blessedness from his bosom? Can I gather no riches from his side? Can I *love* also, and feel that my love is reciprocated? Does this Being of infinite power and majesty care for me any more than I care for the worm at my feet?

They who advocate this view of God, tell me of his benignity and his paternity. But what evidence of this have I in Nature? I see in many things that God is good. I receive unnumbered mercies at his hand. But withal how much there is of evil and of suffering. God has clothed these banks with verdure, and has scattered the beauty of flowers along the brink of the cataract. But still the cataract is there as a perpetual destroyer of this life and beauty; wearing down the banks, swallowing up the trees and flowers; crushing all bright and beautiful things with its terrible power. And as with these lesser forms of life, so with the race of man. "Thou carriest them away as with a flood." Even as the myriad drops from passing clouds and hidden springs, here gathered in one mighty stream, plunge into this remorseless chasm and roll outward to the sea, so through all the ages gone, the myriad units of human life gathered into the stream of time, have plunged into the abyss of death and rolled onward to eter-

nity. The drops of water in the grand cycle of Nature's laws, re-ascend to the clouds, and come back to their old fountains; but is there any re-ascent for man, any new cycle of existence beyond the abyss? I know that God is good; but he is great and powerful, and is he *always* good, and does he care for me? Am I any more to him than a drop in the ever-rolling flood? How can I reach to him? How call Him *my* father and my God?

Moreover, I am guilty. I know this in the measure that I know myself. My thoughts accuse each other. Conscience reproves; memory unrolls her painful scroll; reason condemns. Is he then gracious and forgiving? Where shall I learn this? How shall I know it? Not in the flood, the abyss, the thunder, the pillar of smoke, the drear and silent heaven. Alas this dread unit of Deity, so remote from my feeble nature, so isolated in his personality and his sovereignty, is not the God to whom I, as a sinner, dare to come. I see his awful majesty where he sitteth above the flood; the splendor of that emerald throne, and the sapphire pavement on which he treads; I hear the voice of many waters and the voice of many thunderings, saying, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; fear God, and give glory to him, and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters;" every emotion of wonder, of reverence, of awe, of fear, of sublimity, is stirred with such a conception of the Deity; but my spirit craves that perfect love which casteth out fear.

> Till God in human flesh I see
> My thoughts no comfort find.

IV. For such a view of God I must turn away from nature to Revelation. And now with this heavenly glass I look again upward to the throne. The flood still rolls; the cataract is there, and the abyss with its mighty thunderings, and the terrible crystal, and the living wheel, and the sounding of the host like many waters; but above the throne I see the likeness as the appearance of a MAN. Ah! this revives my timid, sinking heart! Above all this majesty, else so dread and insupportable, I behold glorified humanity upon the throne. The majesty of heaven and earth is not a solitary unit. My nature is represented there. My sympathies are met, my wants are known, my fears are cancelled, my affections are inspired, my joys revived, my hopes filled with immortality. Yet not the vision of a man alone brings me relief from the fear of power, of law, of will, of sovereign unity. For were he only a greater man than I, then would I have so much the greater fear. Were he czar, emperor, or sultan, I should be utterly consumed with terrors at the sight of him upon the throne. An Alexander or Napoleon, clothed with infinite power, were an object too terrible to contemplate. Nay, it is because he who sits upon the throne is *such* a man; the son of man; the man,

Christ Jesus; the same upon whose loving bosom John leaned a the supper, and whom he afterwards beheld upon the throne the appearance of a man; the reality of a man; a partaker c my nature in all just sympathies and affections, yet without sin the God incarnate in the man; the Word made flesh; wisdom and power, and love, united in him who bare our griefs and car ried our sorrows; the Redeemer! clothed with our nature, ye sharing now the glory he had with the Father before the worl was.

And round about him is the symbol of his gracious adminis tration. The bow in the cloud, which by contrast is the mos beautiful symbol in nature of the mercy of God, and which by covenant is made the pledge to the seed of Noah that there shal be no more destruction by the flood; this appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, is the likeness of the glory of the Lord that shines in heaven. And there it rises from the depth of the abyss. The calm, clear shining of the moon por trays its emerald arch; and above the rolling of the flood, above the thunder of the waters, above the dense volume of wrath that rises from the angry chasm, from the lowest depths of the fall from the agony and ruin it has wrought; from the foaming surging billows of sin and death, up even to the terrible crystal this arch of mercy, this covenant of grace, paves my exultant way to that sapphire vault where sits Redeeming Mercy, serene and resplendent, upon the throne of Infinite Majesty. "Upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it; and an appearance of brightness was round about, as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain."

Here then let us bow and worship. In heaven they worship that Man upon the throne—the Word made flesh—far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named. As we daily remember him who died upon the cross, let us also worship him which was dead but is alive forevermore; which was, and is, and is to come. For from the cross that marks the abyss of our fall, the guilt and degradation of a ruined world, and around whose bleeding victim gathers the blackness of darkness from human wo assumed and from divine retribution symbolized in the sacrifice of the well-beloved Son; from that cross, before which the sky is veiled and nature draped in sackcloth, and from which heaven averts its face; from that cross there springs up to the highest heaven and to the central throne, the bow of mercy pledged for our redemption. Nearest the cross nearest the throne. Nay, it is only by way of the cross that we may approach the throne. For here only is the awful purity of Jehovah, the splendor of his majesty and his justice attempered to our vision through the glory reflected in the [redacted]ad.

What thanks do we owe for this revelation of God in Christ! First, for the *revelation* itself; since never would nature have given to man such a conception of the Deity. Nature teaches us God: proves his being; demonstrates his eternal power and godhead; makes proof also of his benevolence. Nature paints for us the bow upon the cloud; but revelation alone makes that bow the pledge of a covenant, the appointed symbol of mercy. Nature would never bring us to the rainbow overarching the throne. It is only by the glass of the prophet passing through the open door of heaven, that we gain this celestial vision. One word of the Bible revealing God in Christ, is worth more than all the voices of nature telling of his glory and his power.

Let us give thanks too, for the *incarnation* of the Deity; the Word made flesh, Immanuel, God with us; but for *this* we had known God only as a power, a law, a sovereign, a judge. Now we know him as a God of sympathy, of compassion, of mercy; a God who has linked his being with ours, that he may link our eternity with his in fruits and blessedness. Take away the incarnation and you make heaven dreadful to a fallen creature; you blot out the man upon the throne; the bow upon the cloud; and leave only the consuming fire.

Above all let us give thanks for the *redemption* thus revealed. The bow is painted on the cloud. The mercy is set over against the judgment. Wisdom, power, holiness, justice, truth, every attribute of majesty is there—all terrible to look upon—but the *bow* is round about—redeeming mercy surrounds them all. Thus from the throne do we come back to the cross; and in Christ crucified, find our redemption from sin and our peace with God.

The grand circle of redeeming love is thus made complete. Had Christ vanished from among men after he had made known his Gospel, without the lively symbol of atonement in the cross, how inadequate had been his mission, and how limited its fruits? Had his body remained in the grave, how imperfect had been our view of his divine errand to our world. Had he returned to heaven on the morning of his resurrection, without the personal observation of his disciples—the empty sepulchre alone witnessing for his departure—how vague had been our sense of his glorified humanity. But the incarnate Word ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the throne. We behold the God descending, the Man ascending, the incarnation and the exaltation completing the work of our redemption, and assuring to them that love him the glory of his presence and the triumph of his grace.

SERMON DCLXV.

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THE CREDULITY OF INFIDELITY.

"They know not, neither will they understand: they walk in darkness, all the foundations of the earth are out of course."—Ps. lxxxii. 5.

"Professing themselves to be wise; they became fools."—ROMANS i. 22.

"I had rather," says Lord Bacon, "believe all the fables of the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind." This sentence, from the pen of the great philosopher, is a very good practical commentary upon my text, as it also forms a very good introduction to the subject which I have announced for my discourse this evening.

"*The Credulity of Infidelity.*" I have no need to spend time about the entrance of my subject, but shall proceed at once within. My object is to show that infidelity is far more credulous than christianity—that the man who rejects revealed religion must believe far more than the christian—the difficulties of infidelity are far more difficult, and the fables of infidelity are far more fabulous, than anything within the compass of christian doctrine. I know that this idea will be very likely to shock the opinions of many, perhaps some of my hearers, and for this reason it is usually taken for granted, that he who swings clear of the christian creed, at the same time frees himself from all the perplexities of revealed religion and all supposable difficulties that may arise in his new condition, that he is not only rid of all the vexed questions of religion, but of all that may beset his irreligious state. But, my hearers, I think you must agree with me that such is far from being true—I am quite sure that the man who hopes, by abjuring the christian faith, to go free from doubts and difficulties, will find that, so far is he from such coveted condition, he is only surrounded with darkness more impenetrable, and problems more insolvable—that the way he has chosen, leading far from the cross, at last brings him into pitfalls and quagmires, and oblivious wildernesses.

I. Let us look a little at the case of one who has taken the highest form of unbelief and rejected the divine existence. This man, I [redacted] his credulity farther than if he were to ad[redacted] doctrine and teachings. He, all[redacted] account for the existence [redacted] of the universe. He

must tell us how this world came to be just as it is, and how all the order and system, apparent in its construction and movements, were and are produced. Here we are in the midst of creations so stupendous as to mock all our attempts to comprehend their magnitude. A material world, or rather material worlds, whose vastness tries our farthest stretch of imagination, and outreaches all our powers of thought and calculation. Not only do these displays of vastness and power challenge us, but the nice and wise adjustment of parts, the amazing expenditure of mechanical skill and genius in the construction of this prodigious machinery, the wonderful adaptation of means to ends, through all the gradations of animal and vegetable life, the harmony of all things existing, and the manifestations of design in every department of nature. The atheist must tell us who placed the sun in the heavens and the moon to give light by night. He must inform us, if he can, who set the planets in their order, and sent them circling so noiselessly, and yet with such inconceivable velocity, through the spacious realms of the heavens. Who hath set bounds to the ocean's flood and keeps the tides in perpetual ebb and flow? Whence came man? and the countless orders of animals? Who clothes the earth with verdure and sends the early and the latter rains? and who bedecks all nature with scenes of indescribable beauty and grace? Now I assume, what I presume no one will deny, that the atheist alike with the theist must account for all these things.

Let us hear how he does it. Says Mirabaud, "The universe is an immense chain of causes and effects, which flow without ceasing the one from the other." But where is the first link in this immense chain of causes and effects? And upon what does this link hang? It is plain that in a chain, every link is dependent upon the one above it. Now let us run up this chain of causes to an indefinite height and yet we must at length reach the last link, and it belongs to the atheist to tell us upon what that link hangs. Who does not see that this is reasoning absurdly? How is it possible that a chain, the separate links of which are all dependent, can be independent as a whole? Surely the "fool hath said in his heart—no God." To suppose an uncaused series or chain of things, every separate one of which is caused and dependent, is an absurdity at which every unprejudiced mind revolts. And yet the credulity of atheism is equal to all this. How can any man know or be reasonably assured that this universe is without an intelligent and omnipotent Father? "The wonder turns on the process by which a man could grow to the immense intelligence that could compass this end. What ages and what lights are requisite for *this* attainment? This intelligence involves the very attributes of Divinity, while a God is denied. For unless this man is omnipresent, unless he is at this moment in every place in the universe, he cannot know but there may be in

some place the manifestations of a Deity by which even *he* would be overpowered. If he does not absolutely know every agent in the universe, the one that he does not know may be God. If he is not himself the chief agent in the universe and does not know what is so, that which is so may be God. If he is not in absolute possession of all the propositions that constitute universal truth, that one which he wants may be that there is a God. If he cannot with certainty assign the cause of all that he perceives to exist, that cause may be God. If he does not know everything that has been done in the immeasurable ages that are past, some things may have been done by the very God he denies. Thus unless he knows all things, that is, precludes all other divine existence by being Deity himself, he cannot know that the being whose existence he rejects does not exist."*

I have probably said enough upon this point to show you that infinite and inextricable difficulties hedge about the path of the atheist, and whoever takes his ground, must believe what the christian will be compelled to reject; thus all this fair creation, with its grand and solemn music and its matchless beauty, is without an intelligent cause. This is credulity before which the christian's faith wanes away into nothingness. True is it that it were far easier to receive without questionings or doubts, the wildest and most extravagant tales from fairy land, than to credit the doctrines of atheism.

II. He who rejects the *revealed word of God* is more credulous by far than they who receive it. It is not only possible but somewhat common for men to avow their belief in the divine existence and yet deny revelation—and there have been some in the world who have even gone so far as to deny that it is possible for God to make any kind of a revelation of his will to men. But this number has been comparatively small, and they are really to be classed with atheists. For the very admission that there is such a being as God is proof enough to ordinary minds, unprejudiced, that he may give to men in some permanent form, a revelation of his will. I speak not now of the *manner* of such Revelation, but simply of the *fact*. But there is still another class of men who admit that revelation is possible, but deny that one has ever been made. They allege that with the power to communicate a knowledge of his will to men, and show them their true relations to their Maker; he has hitherto uniformly refused, or neglected to use that power. Now if we look a little we shall see that they who thus refuse their belief in revelation, involve themselves in the necessity of believing greater absurdities than any and all they profess to reject.

We claim that God not only could make but has made a revelation of his will, and that *here in the Book we have it*. And I affirm that next to the difficulty of explaining away the evidences of

* Foster's Essays, page 35.

God himself, from the surface and the mysterious deeps of the universe—next to this difficulty is that of accounting for the origin and preservation from age to age of this wonderful book, on the supposition that it is not divine and authoritative from heaven. And yet this is the difficulty of infidelity. He who rejects the divine origin of this book is as much bound to account for its existence as I am. It will not answer to ignore it altogether. It is here as really a standing fact, as it has been for centuries, as the sun that shines in mid-heaven, or the waters that belt the world. It is operative among men and it comes knocking at the door of infidelity. And it will not do to say, "I will none of you; I had nothing to do in your origin, and feel no responsibility for your existence." This will never do. The Bible, true or false, will not be shuffled off in this unceremonious manner. It must he accounted for in some reasonable and satisfactory way, or the minds of men will not be at rest respecting it. The believer receives it as God's word and rests there. The infidel says it is not God's word. Will he tell us whence it is? He must believe that this immense volume, containing, as even he must acknowledge, such an amoun and variety of knowledge and wisdom, applicable to all human conditions in all time, is the result of chance or the most astonishing coincidence, fortuitously brought about. He must believe that numerous writers, flourishing at different periods of the world, and of different mental capacities and training, by a mere chance concurrence of circumstances, wrote with reference to one and the same great end—the revelation of man's way of recovery through Jesus Christ from sin and death. He must believe that the preservation of the Scriptures unchanged from age to age, through so long a period, in the midst of circumstances the most unfavorable, has been a mere accident. He must believe that the literal fulfilment of prophecies uttered centuries of years before, was also the result of chance. He must believe that all the influence which this book has exerted over the minds of men for 1800 years, and the firm and tenacious hold that it still has upon the very heart-strings of humanity, all this is the result of unforeseen circumstances. This last would be the master-piece of credulity, for if the Bible be not the word of God, that it professes to be, it is surely the most consummate and awful falsehood that the world could ever imagine, it is either divine or it is the worst book in existence. But is it possible that such a bundle of pretensions, such a mighty conglomeration of lies, could have been palmed off upon reasoning and intelligent beings? And much more is it supposable that instead of losing, it should strengthen its hold upon human conscience and belief with the lapse of centuries. All this infidelity must account for and make consonant with reason and the common sense of mankind. No other book has ever been written so adapted to man, in all the stages of his being and the history of his race. Other books, the products of the most

majestic intellects grow obsolete in whole or in part, and their philosophy and systems vanish away. The works of ancient philosophers, like Aristotle and Plato, are almost wholly superseded by productions of more modern date. Large portions of the writings of Lord Bacon are now obsolete. But not so with this book. It lives on and seems to gather fresh meaning and power with the steady flow of ages and generations; and in its undisturbed depths lie embosomed truths and principles that will doubtless have their full realization in that eternal future that opens to the eye of death. Now the credulity that can pronounce such a production a fable or the fruit of chance, is immense. But this is the credulity of Infidelity!

And my hearers, are you not ready to confess with me that to believe all that one must who rejects the word of God, is a more difficult matter than to accept the creed of christianity without modification or abatement?

III. He who rejects the *christian religion*, must give larger scope to his credulity than he who believes it. There are insuperable difficulties for him to explain. In the outset, he must account for the rapid propagation of christianity in its commencement. As an historical fact, I suppose no sane mind will question it. The historian, *Gibbon*, than whom no one could be more unlikely to admit anything favorable to christianity, concedes, in the 15th chapter of his "Decline and Fall," that the doctrines of Christ did make the most astonishing conquests over almost the entire world during the first three centuries, A. D. But he is not the only unwilling witness to the truth. Celsus, who wrote within 100 years after Paul, bears the most ample testimony to the authenticity and genuineness of christianity, and to its marvellous progress in subduing the opinions of men to its dominion. This writer, who was a most bitter enemy of Christ, particularizes in his writings almost every prominent historical incident of the New Testament, and never once intimates that they are not true. He speaks of the birth of our Saviour and the worship of the magi. The murder of the infants by Herod. The descent of the Spirit at Christ's baptism. The temptation in the wilderness—the conversation with the woman of Samaria. He quotes from the sermon on the mount. He relates with minuteness of detail the trial and crucifixion of Christ, the earthquake and unnatural darkness, and the appearance of the risen Lord to Mary.* Such testimony as this would be strong from any writer, so near the time when all these things transpired. But how much stronger when coming from an avowed enemy of the whole christian scheme? Would Celsus have been likely to record such matters, militating as they did so powerfully against

* Cave's Primitive Christianity.

him, unless he had known that their denial would have destroyed all the confidence of the world in him as a credible historian? Coming from such a man, the significance of such admissions is greatly augmented. Besides he had abundant facilities for satisfying himself of the truth of what he recorded, aside from the simple New Testament narrative. He was so near the advent of Christ, that he could not well be misled as to all the prominent facts of religion. From written accounts by various authors, as also from authentic tradition, he could gather all the data requisite for his deliberate opinion. And the only way he could counteract the influence of his records was by covering them over with the coarsest and most vulgar jests—a thing not uncommon in our day among those who are unable to fortify their hate of christianity by sound argument.*

This, then, must be confessed by all, that during the first three centuries christianity had spread over the greater portion of the inhabited world. "But," says an objector, "did not also Mahometanism make similar conquests?" I reply, No. Not even *similar* conquests. For although millions were brought under the sway of the Koran, yet the means used were entirely different. Christianity made its appeals directly to the consciences and hearts of men. Mahometanism appealed to their superstition and sensuous nature. The one came in peace, and with mild and persuasive countenance said, "Come unto me all you who are weary," &c., the other came in the tramp of armies, "breathing out slaughter," with the clangor of steel and the shouts of fury. The one was zealous for purity and God; the other, for sensual gratification and man; the one pointed the way to holiness, and hence to heaven; the other said, "If you die in battle contending for the glory of Mahomet, you shall loll in endless luxury in the fields of Elysium." No one who is at all acquainted with the history of Mahometanism, will for a moment deny that in its beginning and continuance, it owes its propagation to the power of the *sword*—while christianity relies entirely upon the power of God in making effectual its truths upon the moral nature of his creatures.

Look for a moment at the power of the Gospel over mind. It must be confessed that the doctrines of Christ are in opposition to the natural passions and inclinations of men. They conflict with the general current and tenor of human prejudice and belief. And this must have been peculiarly so in an age when Grecian philosophy had so generally operated to exalt man's conceptions of the essential goodness and purity of his own nature. But notwithstanding all this, christianity had free course among the nations, as it does this day. In the face of all this opposition, it found its way into all ranks and classes of men. Origen, in

* Vide Trans. Anti-Bible Con., Hartford.

writing of this, says, "It is not so much to be wondered at that the eloquence and reason of philosophers should prevail on some very few persons. But that the mean and contemptible language of the Apostles should convert such multitudes from intemperance to sobriety, from injustice to fair-dealing, from cowardice to the highest constancy, yea, so great as to lay down their lives for the sake of virtue; how can we but admire so divine a power as was seen in it."*

Lactantius, a christian writer, declares that no philosophy could do so much good in the world as christianity, because that was suited to all common capacities. Whether Jesus was proclaimed on Mars Hill, or in Ephesus, or at Jerusalem to the gathered hosts at Pentecost, its conquests were alike sure. And so has it been until now. There is no order of mind, from the weakest and most uncultivated, to the mightiest and most refined by education, in which Christ and his cross has not found a dwelling place.

But beside the opposition of the natural heart to christianity, the powers of the State were early arrayed against it. The whole weight of government and example were thrown against all who professed attachment to Christ. And all evils were attributed to them. "They were looked upon as the pests of human society, as they were called the common enemies of mankind." This, says Tertullian, was the common outcry, "If the city be besieged, if anything happen ill in the fields, in the garrison, in the islands, presently they cry out, 'It is because of the christians!' They conspire the ruin of good men, and thirst after the blood of the innocent, patronizing their hatred with this vain pretence, that the christians are the cause of all public misfortunes and calamities. If the Tiber overflows the walls, if the Nile do not as it is wont, overflow the fields, if the heaven do not keep its accustomed course, if an earthquake happen, or a famine or a pestilence, presently the cry is, 'Away with the christians to the lions!'" Yes, my hearers, eloquently has it been said, "Rome in the fullness of her power, when her standards were planted on every soil from the Humber to the Indus, Imperial Rome! would trample out the dangerous principles that began to lurk in her palaces and whisper in her market place. And so she put forth her giant arm and clutched the lawless dissenters from her pagan faith and cast them into the amphitheatre, a prey to wild beasts. And still into the dread arena broader and deeper ever flowed the living tide of martyrs to their doom, and bolder and louder in the ears of the wondering city swelled the triumphant death song, proclaiming to the last the majesty of the christian's God.' Now well inquires Bishop Stillingfleet, "Had it been possible for a cunningly devised fable or any mere contrivance of impos

* Origen, quoted in Stillingfleet.

tors to have prevailed in the world, when the most potent and subtle persons bent their whole wits and design for suppressing it?"

I think we must see that a supposition like that in the face of facts is a most astounding absurdity. And yet he who rejects christianity must account for all these facts to which I have alluded. And he can do it in no other way than by believing that all the success that has hitherto attended christianity has been the result of chance circumstances! He must give an explanation so surrounded with difficulties as to challenge the contempt of a world, that, with all its wickedness, is still conscious of its obligations to the Son of God. If there are mysteries in religion, there are many more and greater for him who votes its destruction. And if there are obscuring clouds sometimes flitting over the disk of the christian sun, then it is sure that he who ignores Christ and his cross, must move in a world whose sun is suffering an intense and eternal eclipse.

IV. I have spoken of christianity as a whole; but the credulity of infidelity will not be the less apparent if we consider its rejection of any single doctrine of the christian religion.

1. The doctrine of the new birth. The christian receives christianity as the means of the moral renovation of mankind. The infidel rejects this notion and resolves all religion into the dictates of nature, making the rule of duty, the mandate of the passions. And yet who so blind as not to see that he alike with the believer must account for all the phenomena of spiritual regeneration in the world?

Let him commence if he please with the Hebrew law-giver, and tell us why he should leave the court of Egypt and all the luxuries of an oriental monarch, and volunteer under the hardships and ignominy which must hedge him about, and at length die on the summit of Pisgah in full view of the promised land? Let the unbeliever explain to us the conversion of Saul of Tarsus into the meek and quiet disciple of Jesus. It was on his way to Damascus, whither he was going to persecute the people of God, that he was converted to Christ, according to the account of it which he gives to King Agrippa and Festus, the Roman governor. Here was a man trained in direct hostility to Christ, and taught to oppose his doctrines with all the force of his impetuous nature. He is suddenly arrested, and his whole character assumes an opposite tone and inclination. And Saul the persecutor terminates a long and glorious career of christian labor and faith, by martyrdom under the blood-thirsty Nero. Will the rejector of the christian doctrine of Regeneration tell us how all this result was effected? Will he give a reasonable account of Paul's radical change from Saul to Paul?

But this is not all. The world is full of instances alike inex-

plicable on the supposition that this doctrine is not true. is a man who has always lived under the influence of christianity; and yet, until he is fifty years of age, he is r less of its claims upon his heart and life. He is intelligen yet proud of his own goodness and virtue. He reads the mandments, and yet he is profane; he sees God's goodnes mercy, and yet is rebellious and impenitent, "treasurir wrath against the day of wrath." But suddenly his thou arrested and fixed upon higher interests and destinies; a length his whole current of being is changed. Hencefor life is the opposite of all it has ever been, and he dies resti the bosom of Christ. Do you say this is a single case and m accounted for on special grounds? I reply, the world is f them; and the picture I have drawn is tame compared wit reality. Now, how will the infidel explain all this? If i be shown that one instance of the kind has ever been kno will sufficiently establish the doctrine; and the man who r it is bound to believe far more than he who receives it, a operation of the power of God in turning the current of natural will, and subduing all his warring and turbulent pa to the control of righteousness. He may say, as many do, doctrine is all a "*myth*," and exists only in crazy and h brains. But what avails all this? A *myth* is something believed; and myths that should be adequate to all such r as I have alluded to, would require far greater credulity tha doctrine just as received by the Christian world. It is some convenient, when facing a great truth that presses hard u man's understanding, and yet offends his natural inclinatio is sometimes convenient for him to thrust it aside as a my the device of a wicked priesthood. And this is often done. the doctrines of Christ will not be disposed of by any such s of-hand. They have existed too long in the world, and hav tenacious a hold of human consciences to admit of any suc nihilation. Men may take this doctrine of the spiritual birth putting it into the crucible of philosophy, may refine it b most intense and glowing heat; but it will come out like the trio from the furnace, untouched by the fires. They may ta through their sentimentalizing process until they reduce it mere sentiment; but it will reappear to human consciousnes same as Jesus declared to Nicodemus—"Except a man be again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And so long a world stands, it will demand an explanation. The Christian it is that change in the soul, wrought by divine power, by w it is turned from sin to holiness, and "from the power of S unto God." What does *he* say of it who rejects this view? if he attributes it to human power, his position is unsupp by facts or analogy; if he shall ascribe it to philosophy, the culty is rather increased than diminished. Such "profe

themselves to be wise become fools—they walk in darkness—all the foundations of the earth are out of course."

2. The rejection of *the atonement* will leave one in increased difficulties. It must be borne in mind that I am now speaking with reference to those who profess to receive the Scriptures as a divine revelation. The Christian has no difficulty respecting the doctrine of atonement. However much his mind may be troubled in investigating some other doctrines of his faith, he has no trouble with this his cardinal truth. He believes that by sin man has alienated himself from his Maker, and can in no way heal the breach he has voluntarily made in the holy law of God, or render satisfaction for the offence he has given to divine justice. He believes that God has sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, who, by his death, has made atonement for sin; and God now accepts all who renounce their sins, and come, through Christ, to him. The believer receives the plain unvarished statement of the Scriptures with reference to the doctrine of atonement, that, sinners as we are, "In Christ we have not only deliverance from wrath, but a divine righteousness wrought out for us. Having no good works of our own, by believing we take to ourselves the work of God, his own fulfilment of his own law, a righteousness which shall last for ever, when all the visible heavens shall be swept away, and the earth shall sink amidst the ascending and brightening changes of creation."* Now, what will he do who rejects this Scripture doctrine? Here this book is full of it! and he who has read it without a theory to support, and yet has failed to see the doctrine of vicarious atonement, displays an almost incredible amount of blindness or carelessness. It is the professed object of the Scriptures to reveal Christ as the great atoning sacrifice. And if this be denied, upon what principle are we to explain the numerous passages in the Old Testament, and the Pauline and other epistles, minutely describing and defining it? Even most bitter opponents of the doctrine admit that it cannot be expunged from Paul's writings without affecting their quality. But then they avoid all difficulty by denying the divine authority of all those parts of Scripture which affirm the doctrine. Most of these writers are shrewd enough to see that if they receive the Scriptures, and deny atonement, they impose new burdens upon their credulity, and pierce themselves through with many fresh difficulties. Men are everywhere, and under all circumstances, conscious of their need of atonement. Why does the victim's blood spirt from beneath the ponderous wheels of Juggernaut? Why do the cries of the suffering mendicant of thirty years rend the air of India? Why does the devotee of Brahma or Vishnu tear and cut his quivering flesh? All this means something. We say that it is evidence of the felt neces-

* Douglass' *Truths of Religion.*

sity of atonement pressing upon the sinful heart, and accusing conscience of man, in every age and clime, since the forfeiture of Paradise. What says the Infidel? He must believe it all a delusion or a farce. I leave him to settle the matter as best he may. One thing however, I think he must admit, that men are not very apt to groan under such intolerable burdens, self-imposed, nor do penance where no guilt has been incurred to be washed away.

3. The rejection of the doctrine of future punishment imposes a double tax upon human credulity. This is a doctrine pervading the very texture of Scripture, and, as I have said with reference to the atonement, most of those who reject future punishment deny the validity of inspiration. Theodore Parker, whose authority as a scholar and infidel, stands above suspicion, says, "I am willing to admit that Jesus taught the doctrine of future and eternal punishment for the incorrigible sinner;" but, he adds, like a consistent man, "Jesus did not always teach truly." But he who denies the doctrine in question and yet acknowledges the Bible as God's word, must tell us (1,) Why God should ever permit so many passages in his word which at least seem to speak of the punishment of the wicked after the close of this life? He must tell us why God ever speaks of the vindication of his justice upon the heads of the finally impenitent? He must, of course, believe that all these are random passages, and mean less than nothing—apparently allowed merely for the annoyance of sinful and rebellious man.

(2.) He must tell us why the analogy appears so striking between the present economy of divine government and the doctrine he rejects—Why does God punish at all? Why compel his creatures to suffer the most excruciating tortures in this life, poverty, sickness, oppression and death? How does this consist with his paternal character? Am I told that only those suffer who sin, and their suffering is proportioned to their crime? Then why, I ask, such marked inequality in the divine dealings? We often see those whose lives are most corrupt, passing the most unstricken through life, while the virtuous and good are the victims of affliction and wrong. On the ground of infidelity I must inquire, where all these wrongs shall be rectified, and justice meted out?

(3.) Why all these spoken and unspoken fears of that mysterious "something after death?" Why do men trouble themselves about that which has *no foundation?* If there be no ground for fear, why is the preacher ever accused of appealing to the fears of his hearers, and why are these appeals ever effectual in arousing fear? Why does hell sound so unpleasantly if there be no hell? Intelligent men are not often terrified by fancies or fantacies.

Now the rejector of this doctrine must crucify his understanding before he can explain away the announcements of Scripture, and his credulity must be sufficiently expansive to affirm that the great portion of the human race have been, and are still laboring under a kind of mental hallucination, and that hell exists only in the brains of fools or madmen.

I think I have shown that Infidelity is more credulous than Christianity. In coming to this conclusion, I am not conscious of having been designedly unfair, or of having used specious methods of reasoning. In concluding, I remark, (1,) He who demolishes the whole or any part of the Christian faith, ought to anticipate and provide against the results of his act. It is comparatively an easy thing to pull down a fair structure, but not so easy to construct one. It is no great work to take away life, but who can give it? Well hath the master poet reasoned in the person of the Moor, as he with light in hand stands debating the murder of his wife,

> "Put out the light, and then put out the light,
> If I quench thee thou flaming minister,
> I can again thy former light restore
> Should I repent me; But once put out thine,
> Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
> I know not where's the Promethean heat
> That can thy light relume. When I have plucked thy rose
> I cannot give it vital growth again,
> It needs must wither."*

You can crush the life out of the little insect that crawls at your feet; but only God can raise it to life again. So you can sweep away the precious doctrines of religion and laugh their author to scorn, but "what will you do in the end thereof?" If you demolish who will reconstruct? If you kill, who will make alive? And if Christ fails you, who will come to your rescue from irretrievable ruin?

(2.) He who rejects the Christian religion ought to substitute something better in its place. I have said before that infidelity, so far as it has any system, is a system of negations. It denies every thing and establishes nothing. I think this is undeniably the prevailing characteristic of all forms of unbelief. Now I ask, is it wise—is it benevolent or merciful to reject the creed of Christendom and give no reasonable and satisfying substitute in its place? Is he a wise man who destroys all his means of defence and protection in the midst of enemies, with no hope of securing the use of others more potent and effectual? Who will say it? But what less than this does he do, who demolishes the defences of Christian faith, and takes the leap of death in the dark. It is easy to talk lightly of religion and its hopes when in the gala day of life. I know that strong-minded men and trifling youth

* Othello, act v. s. 2.

can flippantly dispense a joke upon piety, and use the flexibilities of speech in contemning its author. But I have yet to learn that the presence and supports of faith in Christ can be lightly dispensed with in the room where the mortal is lost in the immortal, and the temporal vanishes away before the eternal. That is generally a place where the honesty and sincerity of men appear. *There* unbelief will not answer. The soul demands something positive and sure. If any of my hearers are disposed to risk an exit from this scene of things, resting upon an apology for the Christian religion, I wish here faithfully to caution them against venturing their souls at the judgment-seat with a less perfect covering than the Righteousness of the Lamb of God who came to seek and to save that which was lost.

DOCTRINE THE BASIS OF PRACTICE.

THE present age is said to be eminently practical, discarding theory and speculation, and estimating everything according to its utility. This doubtless is a characteristic of a desirable nature. But as it regards religion, may not a mistake be apprehended in respect to utility, that of following what is only imagined to be practical, and losing sight of the importance of what is doctrinal and fundamental to all duty;—that in an excited attention to schemes and measures and results, the teachers of religion should become diminutive in their knowledge of "the faithful word?" The religion of Christ is, indeed, and ought to be a practical thing; and all christians must be practical men. But if things are considered as practical according to their power to produce effects, what is so practical, what has ever exerted such influence on the human mind, or effected such changes and movements in the moral world, as "the doctrines of grace?" These doctrines are the grand secret of all the energy of the christian faith. They cannot be dispensed with; they cannot be neglected or obscured; they cannot be made to occupy a secondary place in the minds of men, without detriment and ultimate extinction to every religious interest. They must be the light of all measures, the soul of all preaching, the stimulus and guide of all zeal, the antidote to all confusion and wild disorder, the stability and growth of all piety.

It may be possible to discuss the doctrinal truths of the Gospel too *exclusively*, or too *abstractly*, but it is impossible to over-estimate their practical importance. The efficiency of the pulpit must ever depend under God upon its faithful exhibition of these truths. Those pulpits which disown, obscure, or long disuse them, will always witness an unsound and declining state of religion. *Preach* the *preceptive* part of religion ever so abundantly

and eloquently, it has no force or significancy apart from the *doctrinal*. The doctrines are the *reasons* of the precepts; they are the great facts upon which the precepts are founded. Without the doctrines the *motives* of the Gospel have no existence. Its appeals, its promises, its warnings, have no meaning. The Unitarian does away the divinity of Christ, and the fact of an atonement. Hence, in his scheme, there is no ground to trust in Christ as a Saviour, nor any peculiar reason for exalted love to him. The Universalist denies a future retribution to the wicked. Hence threatenings, invitations, commands, conditions, warnings against a doom which has no existence, promises of a state of blessedness as certain without conditions as with;—all these, as motives, signify nothing. Paul preaching the great doctrines of retribution and an atonement, derives from them the most weighty motives to holy obedience. "For," says he, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." And again, "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." But how entirely are these motives, "the terror of the Lord," our final Judge, and "the love of Christ," our only Saviour, done away in the systems alluded to: they remove the doctrines of the Gospel and thus destroy its force.

The doctrines of the Gospel too, furnish the only foundation for all right *affections of heart*. What foundation is there for true christian *humility*, for instance, in the mind of one who is uninstructed as to the fact and the extent of his own *sinfulness;* who is not made to know that in him, that is, in his flesh, dwelleth no good thing—that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and the heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked? He never will be a truly penitent and humble man, till he is prepared for it by the doctrine of human depravity, but will be a Pharisee, thanking God that he is not as other men are, or like the young man, asking what he lacks yet. What foundation is there for faith, hope, love, submission, patience, zeal, but in those enlightening, subduing, inspiring *truths*, which alone can justify or produce such affections? Precepts alone, exhortations alone, "measures" alone, whether new or old, which in late years have been so much the subject of contention, will be wholly destitute of power, unless the preacher gives prominence and force to those great truths which constitute the peculiarity of "the faith once delivered to the saints,"—which respect the sovereignty of God, the unholiness, accountability, and eternal destinies of man, the mediation of Christ, the necessity of regeneration, faith, and repentance, and divine forgiveness through a divine Redeemer.

These truths are "the sword of the Spirit;" they are "the fire and the hammer which breaketh in pieces the flinty rock;" and without them preaching is vain. Without them the eloquence of Chalmers, as he himself so impressively told the world, may expand itself for twelve years, without effect.

His emphatic language upon this subject is, "I could expatiate on the meanness of dishonesty, on the villainy of falsehood, on the despicable arts of calumny, on all those deformities of character which awaken indignation against the pests and disturbers of human society. Now could I upon the strength of these expostulations, have got the thief to give up his stealing, and the liar his deviations from truth,—it never occurred to me that all this might have been done, and yet the soul of every hearer have remained in full alienation from God,—as destitute of the essence of religious principle as ever. But the interesting fact is, that during the whole of that period, in which I made no attempt against the enmity of the carnal mind to God, I certainly did press the reformations of honor, and truth, and integrity, among my people, but I never once heard of any such reformations being effected. I am not sensible that all the vehemence with which I urged the virtues and proprieties of social life, had the weight of a feather on the moral habits of my parishioners." And the experience of this eminent preacher is so distant from novelty that it only goes to support a sentiment which accords with universal facts, that belief affects practice, and consequently *doctrinal is* the best *practical* preaching.

The Puritans firmly believed and clearly exhibited the doctrines of grace, and consequently, as President Porter observed, "there was an awful contrast between their morality and that of those who rejected the evangelical system." So obvious is the reforming influence of this system, that even infidel writers do not hesitate to affirm that those who "hold the doctrines of grace" have less apparent conformity to the world, and more of a principle of real religion than the advocates of mere preceptive christianity; and, moreover, that they who, from a principle of religion, ascribe more to God and less to man than others, have the greatest elevation of piety.

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SERMON DCLXVI.

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A PLEA FOR SEAMEN.*

"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters."—Psalm cvii. 23.

These are the persons in whose behalf I am to speak this evening. Their friends are every where endeavoring to awaken the attention of the public to the claims of seamen on the prayers, the sympathies, and the benevolence of their fellow creatures. They are persuaded, that information upon this subject is all that is required to secure from Christians the same concern about the spiritual and temporal welfare of sailors, that they manifest in regard to all other members of the human family; and it is owing to this desire to spread this information as widely as possible from the pulpit, as well as from the press, that I have been called upon to address you upon the present occasion.

I. You may perhaps think it strange that I should observe in the first place, with respect to sailors, that they are *human beings*

But the neglect which they have met from their fellow creatures.

* This eloquent discourse was first preached in the city of Philadelphia, January 25, 1846, in behalf of the Pennsylvania Seamen's Friend Society. It was repeated about three years ago, in the city of New York. In both cities numerous auditors gave most hearty responses to its excellence by large donations to the Seamen's cause. The Editor of this work takes great pleasure in being able to present to his readers, both in America and Europe, so excellent a Sermon on this subject; and hopes its publication will still more extensively and deeply interest the minds of the Christian public in the welfare of Seamen, and result in increased contributions for their benefit.

seems to make that observation necessary. Obliged, from the nature of their calling, to be wanderers on the face of the earth, and to spend a large proportion of their lives on the solitary deep —never staying long in one place, and separated from landsmen by the uncongeniality existing between their pursuits and habits, they have been forgotten—being out of sight, they have been out of mind. A few years ago you could scarcely find in the catalogue of Christian charities one of them devoted to seamen's interests, and even now those interests are only beginning to attract attention. I observe, therefore, that they are human beings, of the same flesh and blood as ourselves, and on that ground alone entitled to our sympathies. It is a spurious benevolence that limits its regard to peculiar objects. Connected by the link of a common brotherhood, we should feel for all who are comprehended in the fraternal chain. The orphan, the widow, the aged, the sick, the blind, the poor, and the ignorant, should not be allowed to *engross* our sympathies. It is not only the necessities of this or of that class of men that should awaken our compassion, but the necessities of all. The benevolence of God, which as being perfect, should regulate the benevolence of his creatures, is expansive. It shines like the sun upon the good and upon the evil; it descends like the rain upon the just and upon the unjust. And redeeming love is equally comprehensive—"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,"—not sinners of any particular class, but sinners of all classes; and as every sinner in distress excites his compassion, so every fellow creature in distress should excite ours. Sailors are human beings.

II. I observe again that they are *Immortal beings.*

This gives them their highest claim to our compassion. To clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to console the miserable and to relieve the indigent, are charitable objects, but they are not the most exalted objects of human charity, and for this reason they are not the most important—the highest object of charity is that which has absorbed the solicitudes of Heaven; which has excited in the bosom of every angel and archangel about the throne the deepest interest; which has awakened the sympathies of the Son of God to such a pitch as to make him willing to die for its relief. The soul is the highest object of charity. What comparison is there between the worth of the soul and that of the body? The soul, with its vast powers, and the body, with its feeble capacities; the soul, with its endless existence, and the body, with its brief duration; the soul, with its untold destinies, and the body, with its paltry interests. The salvation of a single soul would be a higher act of benevolence than to abolish all the physical suffering and to dispel all the mental darkness that exists in the world; because the salvation of that soul would secure its happiness, not only for the brief space allotted to us in this life, but forever and

ever. And the noblest Christian charities of the day are founded upon this principle. The societies for furnishing every nation under heaven with the word of God in its own tongue, the societies for the propagation of the gospel in foreign parts, the societies for sending missionary heralds into heathen lands—they are all founded upon the principle that the value of the soul gives it a claim upon our sympathies, and exertions, and prayers, far exceeding that of any other charitable object whatever. And if so, whence this neglect of those who go down to the sea in ships? Is one soul more valuable than another, that we charter vessels to send preachers and Bibles into distant countries, whilst we make no effort for the conversion of those by whom they are navigated? Are the souls of Hottentots and Caffres of more esteem than the souls of seamen? The truth is, my brethren, that the benevolence of many is too much regulated by fancy and too little by principle. The conversion of cannibals and barbarians, who celebrate their detestable orgies before hideous idols is an enterprize so fraught with romance and heroism, so full of sentiment and adventure, that in comparison, the claim of seamen appears to be an insipid subject. But fancy is no fit umpire in this cause. The principle is the thing by which we should be governed, and that teaches us that a soul ready to perish, whether it be the soul of the barbarian or the Greek, the Jew or the Gentile, the bond or the free is equally precious. With the strangest inconsistency men have associated for the prevention of cruelty to animals, whilst the souls of seamen were allowed to perish. They have forgotten altogether that seamen have souls, and leaving those souls to die, they have busied themselves in relieving the sufferings of the horse and the dog. I am far from insinuating any thing to the disparagement of other charities. Benevolence, as has been already observed, cannot be too extensive. We only complain that it has not been extensive enough, that whilst it has groaned over the degradation of the idolater, and has even condescended to weep over the sufferings of the brute, it has scarcely so much as cast its eye upon the distress of the seaman. Are his numbers then so small as to have caused the oversight? On the contrary, there are two millions of sailors in the world—there are one hundred and fifty thousand in your own land. Are numbers like these so insignificant as to escape notice or deserve neglect? *Deserve neglect!* I recall that expression. If there were but one soul in danger of perdition, if, excepting one soul, the entire population of the globe were converted to Christ—it would be an achievement worthy of the ambition of all the rest, it would be a a deed honorable to their benevolence—it would be an exploit that would cover them with glory and make heaven ring with the songs and acclammations of angels to snatch that one soul from destruction. Sailors are immortal beings.

III. But I observe again that they are unfortunate beings. Unfortunate in this, the neglect that they have experienced.

When you see them reeling in the streets or carousing on shore, when you listen to their boisterous mirth, their obscene songs and their profane language, do not ascribe these proofs of profligacy and thoughtlessness to their being naturally worse than other men. Ascribe them to their being more neglected than other men—to the little care that has been taken for the promotion of their happiness, the improvement of their minds, the culture of their affections and the formation of their habits. Ascribe them to their being thrown early in life upon a cold, unfeeling and selfish world, which has been too much occupied in the prosecution of its own interests to think of theirs. Ascribe them to their being prematurely divorced from the beloved inmates, the quiet pleasures, the sacred duties, the holy influences of home. It is to these that we are all of us, more or less, indebted for the development of our intellectual character, the culture of our feelings, and the possession of our religious principles. If we have escaped from ignorance and vice, and from their accompanying degradation and wretchedness, it has been owing to the watchful superintendence that we experienced in youth. But the sailor, often abandoning his home whilst yet a child, is often abandoned even in childhood, to immoral influences. He hears what? a mother's prayers? a mother's counsels? a father's admonitions? a father's warnings? No. He hears sacred things ridiculed, religion laughed at, vice applauded, and the name of God blasphemed. He hears it from stem to stern, in the steerage and in the forecastle, and too often on the quarter-deck. Instead of seeing the highest principles and best feelings of our nature exemplified in those who are his shipmates and constant associates, he too often has nothing beforehis eyes but the example of hardened and profligate and abandoned men. There is enough of vice on shore, but there you can get out of the hearing and away from the influence of what is evil. You can choose your comrades from the good and virtuous; but cooped up within the narrow confines of a ship, the sailor must be a willing or unwilling witness of all its scenes, and be content with, perhaps, the worst companions. Let me ask you, then, is it wonderful that he should be intemperate, prodigal, dissolute and profane? No pains have been taken until lately to make him otherwise. On shore you have schools for the ignorant, libraries for the young, lyceums for the apprentice, institutes for the mechanic. You have lectures on science, lectures on religion, religious teachers, religious services and public opinion. All contribute to protect the morals, enlighten the minds and to form the principles of men on shore.

You have not only societies to prevent vice, but to reform the vicious—to reclaim the inebriate, and to bring back the wanderer into the paths of virtue—but, until lately, no attempt has been made either to instruct or reform the sailor. He has been left to sink deeper and deeper into the slough of profligacy, the subject of everybody's abuse, but of nobody's compassion—reviled by all, aided by none. And this cruel indifference has made him reck-

less. Not respected by others, he has lost respect for himself—treated as a proscribed person, an outcast, he has abandoned himself to what he considers his fate, and losing all sense of shame, has wrought iniquity with greediness.

I repeat, therefore, that sailors are unfortunate beings. They have been like ships foundering at sea, many a sail in sight, without any of them having humanity enough to lend assistance—like drowning mariners for whom nobody would take the trouble to lower a boat. What do I see? A vessel in distress—without aid her loss is certain, and the crew accordingly yield to despair. Such has been the effect of the indifference of the public to seamen's interests: it has made them desperate. But see! help arrives, and the scene changes; the crew work with animation and hope, their prospects brighten, their damages are repaired, and soon they are in a condition to move onward. And this has been the effect of such societies as that I advocate;—their effect has been to encourage sailors to labor in the work of their own salvation. Were you to read their reports, you would find that sailors appreciate and second the exertions that are made in their behalf—that wherever churches are built for them, they will attend; that wherever ministers will visit them they will listen; that they receive tracts and other religious books with joy; and that they look upon the holy Scriptures as a more valuable guide than the compass by which they steer, or than the chart by which they sail—and there has been a corresponding result. He who accompanies the employment of his appointed means with his promised blessing, has already crowned the efforts of these societies with astonishing success. Many from the abundance of the sea have been converted unto God; and, as a necessary consequence, reclaimed from vice. It is a sacred truth, that the readiest way of amending man's temporal condition is by exalting his spiritual. Religion is followed by a train of attendant blessings, a glorious procession;—she is clothed in white, the emblem of purity; a single flower, the well-known symbol of innocence and loveliness, adorns her hair; and, as she advances, she extends her inviting hand to all. Temperance follows: she bears a goblet of pure water, clear as crystal, and sparkling as the gem—her eye is radiant with life, her cheek blooming with health—her form active, and her step buoyant. Charity follows, leaning upon the arm of Virtue—her figure concealed by an ample veil, and her eyes cast upon the ground. Domestic happiness follows. She is represented by a lovely woman, giving one hand to her husband, and leading her child by the other. Industry and Abundance bring up the train—the one looks cheerful and contented, the other merry and joyous. She has golden wheat ears around her brow, and a girdle of green about her waist. Fruits and flowers are in her right hand, "and in her left hand riches and honor." By their exertions for the spiritual welfare of seamen, these societies have in numberless instances put them in possession of

these blessings, have made the intemperate sober, the sensual chaste, the imprudent economical, the idle industrious, and thus have brought happiness and prosperity to many households. Oh, brethren! assist in the prosecution of such a work as this, and then the unfortunate beings now sailors, will soon be unfortunate no longer.

2. But again, they are unfortunate in the hardships they endure and the dangers they encounter.

For months, and perhaps even for years, they are estranged from the comforts, the blessings, and the endearments of home—the boy from his mother, the husband from his wife, the father from his children. The boy dreams of home—there are spread before him the play-grounds of his childhood; he sees the very cottage where he was born—it is embosomed in trees; the rose, the jessamine, and the honeysuckle, entwine with their intermingled sweets its trellised porch; he sees the mother he adores, the brothers and sisters he loves, but he no sooner tries to clasp them in his arms, than behold it is a dream!

The husband dreams—the voyage is ended, the harbour gained, the anchor dropped, the sails furled, the crew dismissed, and he hastens upon the wings of affection to his dwelling. He knocks impatiently—who opens the door? One whom he loves as his own soul. He hears her exclamation of delight, he sees her eyes flash with joy—but he no sooner would fold her to his heart, than behold it is a dream!

The father dreams—his family are assembled in the accustomed room, his children are there—his wife is there—he is seen—his little one holds out its hands for his embrace—and the glad cry of recognition comes from all—but he would no sooner impress the longed-for kiss upon his infant's brow, than behold it is a dream!

But separation from home is only the beginning of the sailor's trials. You are to remember that that separation often takes place under the most painful circumstances. When disease perhaps has invaded his household, threatening home with the bereavement of wife or children. Stern necessity tears him away from their bed of sickness, and from what often proves their bed of death. He goes away, too, without the consolation of knowing that they are among friends; neglected himself, they whose fortunes are identified with his, share his destinies. They are sailor's wives, sailors' children, and he leaves them with many an anxious thought about the future. But we thank God that at least in many ports, his anxiety on this head, is now made groundless. This society, and many others of a similar character throughout the land, employ those who, full of love to God and man, visit the families of absent seamen, relieve them in distress, comfort them in sorrow, and speak to them of Him who is "the husband of the

widow, and the father of the fatherless." But to return to the sailor. There is only one class of men whose lives are more shortened by the nature of their occupation than his, and those men do not work above ground. They labour in mines, and amid foul exhalations and noxious vapors, dig out for others the treasures of the earth With their exception, the sailor's life is shorter than that of any operatives. And why? Because the treacherous element upon which he sails, and the capricious winds to which he trusts, oblige him by snatches to take his rest; because he wanders through all climes, from the equator to the pole—now scorching with heat, then freezing with cold. Because he works in all weathers; and because the worse the weather, the harder he must work. In the rain storm, when it descends in torrents, and continues so long as not to leave him a change of clothing in his chest. In the sleet, in the snow, in the frost, when the rigging becomes like jagged steel, and the sails like sheet iron. In the tempest, when the masts quiver like reeds, when the winds rage and the seas roar, when the good ship struggles as it were for life, now plunging as though in despair, into the depths below, and then rising, as if with exultation, on the towering wave. Then must the sailor work; and it is these hardships, this severe toil, this constant exposure, that shortens his life. But alas it may be fearfully shortened by other causes than the wear and tear of his calling. How often, in the discharge of some perilous duty aloft, is he precipitated into the deep, and swallowed up by the devouring waters! How often cast away! How often the victim of the malignant diseases of foreign climes. How many sailors have met with an untimely death from the club of the savage, the sword of the foe, or the desperate charge of the wounded whale! But there would be no end of particularizing in this way the perils and hardships of a seaman's life. I must appeal to the hurricane and the battle, to the ocean with its dark caverns, and to foreign shores with their unburied dead. I must call upon the thousands who have gone down with the waves for their winding sheet, and who await in their deep sepulchres the resurrection of the dead, to bear witness what toils, what dangers, and what sufferings are the sailor's lot.

We may observe, however, that sailors commonly die at sea. Death, bitter at any time, must have its bitterness exceedingly increased under such circumstances. A ship is no hospital. None but able-bodied men are rated on her books; and if sickness befall they must take their chance. The medicine chest, perhaps, is the only proof on board that such a calamity was ever thought of.

Where does the sailor die? In a cheerful room? On a couch of feathers and a pillow of down? Waited on by an attentive nurse? Watched over by anxious friends? Surrounded by sobbing and weeping relatives? Far different. In that wretched hole where a suspended lantern just gives light enough to show the seaman's chest by which it is encumbered. In that rude hammock, swing-

ing from the beam. There is his bed, and there too is his shroud. There is no minister of Christ there, to listen to his wailings over an ill-spent life, or to awaken him to a sense of his sin and danger. There is no messenger of love there, to speak of Jesus and point him to that anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast. No herald of that salvation which, "like the ocean itself, rises above high water mark, overtops the mountains of sin, and washes away the guilt of every penitent transgressor." He dies without comfort in this world, and too often without hope in another.

But suppose the dying sailor to have enjoyed in former years the fostering care of this society, how different in all probability would be his end. Then he would have in his possession the Word of God; then he would call to mind as he lay in his loneliness, many a solemn truth—many an earnest prayer—many a kind exhortation—many an encouraging promise which he had heard from the mouth of its Missionary. Then, perhaps, his danger would strike him like a thunderbolt—his heart might be smitten—he might shed tears of penitence, and cry out with affecting earnestness, "Lord save, or I perish." I remember hearing of a sailor who in a storm at sea was observed sitting unmoved with a Bible in his hand, and was heard to say, "Courage, my lads, we are as near heaven at sea as on shore;" and oh! if you would but give the sailor the word of God—if you but watch over his soul when he returns to port—if you would provide for his religious instruction when he makes the land—a hope might be breathed into his bosom, a peace imparted to his spirit, which the prospect of death in any shape could neither disturb or take away. He might be swallowed up by the waters—he might be cut down in the battle—he might be murdered by the savage—he might be mangled by the rocks—he might die away from home and kindred, on board his ship—but under all circumstances, he could exclaim with the Apostle Paul, "If my earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, I know I have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

3. I observe, lastly, that sailors are unfortunate in the treatment they meet with when they arrive in port.

No sooner does the anchor of a return ship reach the bottom, than her crew are surrounded by thieves in the disguise of honest men. The simple hearted sailor is to be their prey; his hard-earned wages their plunder. They salute him in his own hearty fashion, and with many false professions and flattering speeches, lure him to their dens—low houses where they minister to his intemperance and sensuality—give him the bowl and the harlot—pander to his vices and applaud his profligacy. This, however, does not last long—impatient for their nefarious harvest, they produce their bill, which the sailor, who has been half the time insensible, is obliged to pay. He has lost in a few days the

reward perhaps of years of incessant toil—the price of many a risk of life and limb. He must either go into the streets or brave again the dangers of the ocean, only to return and suffer again the same imposture. Have we any sense of justice? Any feelings of humanity? If we be not more cruel than death, and more unmerciful than the grave, we must feel indignant at such oppression.

But how can he be delivered from the jaws of these devourers? You are to remember that their houses are the only ones open for his convenience. It is vain to say that he could find accommodation where landsmen find it. Seamen are gregarious in their habits; they love to live together. The only plan is that which this Society is anxious to accomplish—to build a Sailor's Home—large enough to accommodate all applicants, comfortable enough to find favour in the eyes of seamen, and handsome enough to be creditable to the city where it stands. A *cheap* home, where, instead of being plundered, the sailor would be able to save a large proportion of what he earns. A *moral home*, where in place of profaneness and vice, he would find temperance, soberness and chastity. An *intellectual* home, supplied with books of an instructive, interesting and useful character. A *religious* home with religious superintendence, religious worship, conducted by religious men, upon religious principles. In the temporary establishments of this kind, two in number, which the Pennsylvania Seamen's Friend Society now sustains, there have been accommodated during the past year 776 seamen, 470 of whom have, under its auspices, renounced the use of intoxicating drinks, and many of them become new creatures in Christ Jesus. Public worship has been held in these buildings every Sabbath, daily family prayer offered up in the household, and the Scriptures, with other religious books, given to the inmates on their going to sea. Encourage such a charity as this, and a change will speedily be wrought upon the character, the standing, and the destinies of this invaluable class of men; instead of being a by-word and a reproach among all nations—instead of impeding by their example, the progress of the Gospel abroad, and encouraging by their vices the march of impiety at home, they will carry a blessing wherever they go—they will earn for themselves a high place in public esteem—they will be itinerant missionaries of the Church of Christ, and hasten that period when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

And now, if the past neglect which the sailor has experienced—if the value and jeopardy of his immortal soul—if his numbers, his degradation, his misfortunes, his hardships, his perils and his melancholy end—if these be insufficient to touch your hearts and open your hands, what additional motives can I urge in his behalf. If you have a spark of that generosity for which the sailor is so distinguished—of that gratitude for which he is so proverbial, your offerings to-night towards the emancipation of his mind from

ignorance, and of his soul from vice, and of his body from oppression will be large and liberal.

There are no individuals in this assembly who are not deeply in the sailor's debt. Men of science, what a revenue of knowledge has the sailor contributed to your treasury, and through you to the world at large. How many weary circumnavigations of the globe has he accomplished—how many previously unknown lands has he discovered! He has enriched your cabinets with the most curious productions of foreign climes. Your records teem with his observations upon distant countries, and with speculations founded upon his researches.

Commercial men, your obligations to the seamen are of greater magnitude. He has not embarked in your service in order to determine the figure of the earth, or to observe the transit of a planet, or to ascertain the locality of the magnetic pole. You have sent him forth to do business on great waters—to traffic with the savage on his treacherous coast—to chase the leviathan on the watery waste—to bring the fabrics of the East from their distant looms, and the rich furs of the north from their frozen homes—to endure hardships, to face dangers, to abandon friends—to peril life, in order that you may be rich as princes and wealthy as kings.

I repeat—there are no individuals in this assembly who are not deeply in the sailor's debt. I see many a fashionable woman here to-night who would help to bear me out in this assertion. She is attired in the trophies of the seaman's hardihood. Those gracefully drooping plumes he brought from Africa; that magnificent shawl from Thibet; those furs which protect her from the winter's blast, from the bleak regions of Siberia; those rich silks, from China, and those sparkling gems from the remotest islands of the Indian Ocean. In her dwelling she is surrounded with similar proofs of the sailor's daring. When she comes down in a morning she finds on her breakfast table the productions of the Indies, East and West; her eye rests upon the carpets of Turkey, the mirrors of France, and a thousand other articles of use or elegance which were produced or manufactured in distant climes.

If, again, we are interested in the conversion and civilization of the globe—if we are engaged in the mighty work of sending into heathen lands the Gospel and the temporal blessings which follow in its train, we are indebted to the sailor for carrying into effect the benevolent design.

If we have any love of country, any regard for those who protect its trade, defend its rights, maintain its honour, how can we feel otherwise than under the deepest obligation to the gallant sailor who is continually hazarding his life for these ends?

I leave his cause, then, in your hands. Assist him with a little of that wealth for which some of you are so largely indebted to his bravery and fortitude. Add your name to the list of the contributors to this Society, and you will not only have the pleasure of knowing that you have discharged a duty and performed a charitable deed, but in that day when the sea shall give up its dead, you may have the unspeakable satisfaction of receiving the blessing of thousands who were ready to perish, had not you compassionated their sorrows and relieved their sufferings. AMEN.

SERMON DCLXVII.

BY REV. C. MOORE,

SLATELICK, P.A.

EARTH TRANSITORY—HEAVEN ABIDING.

"'For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."—HEB. xiii. 14.

THE term city, as here employed, is intended to teach the transitory nature of earthly homes and comforts, and also to show forth the permanent and the enduring character of the Christian's glorious home in heaven. The kingdom of future glory is in the Bible called a city—a holy city, because of its holy laws, ordinances, and citizens. It is also called the city of God, because he planned, built, rules, protects, and dwells in it. The church on earth is sometimes called a city,—Christ is represented as the foundation of it; truth, the towers of it; ordinances, the palaces of it; and the walls of it, the promises and the protection of God. In the text, however, the obvious design of the term is to represent the unchanging state of blessedness which shall constitute the Christian's final home, in contrast with the changing and mutable character of all earthly cities. Various figures are employed in the sacred Scriptures to set forth, in a strong point of view, the vanity and uncertainty of all earthly affairs, as also to exhibit the substantial excellencies and fadeless glories of the *rest* that remains "to the people of God." And among these choice, heaven-selected specimens of representation, the one we have chosen to consider occupies a pre-eminent place.

There are two propositions contained in this subject, which I shall consider in the order in which they present themselves. I. That *here we have no continuing city.* II. I shall describe briefly the character of the one Christians are seeking: "*But we seek one to come.*"

I. First, then, we call attention to the fact that *here we have no continuing city.* And is it not almost a self-evident truth? Do we not daily see and feel that it is even so? Has not your own experience convinced you, long since, that it is painfully true? If not, look for a moment at the history of the earth on which you dwell.

What does it present? Is it not a gloomy and melancholy picture of fading, changing scenes, which almost elude the grasp of the mind in its attempt to contemplate them? The universal voice of this world's recorded history proclaims uncertainty and change in everything human and earthly. The historic pen has written decay in indelible characters on the mightiest works of man. It unites with the pen of inspiration in inscribing mutability on all things below the sun. The towers and monuments of antiquity, the cities and pyramids, where are they? Let recorded facts answer. Those mighty empires, too, that once rose in grandeur and in power, have gone down in gloom, and now live only in the remembrances of departed greatness. With respect to things of earth, whether cities or towns, or peaceful country houses, all are alike perishing. Some are more enduring than others, with respect to some of the elements of existence; but all, sooner or later, yield to force of devouring time.

If, therefore, I show the instability of the most substantial of earth's possessions, my first proposition will be sustained; and to effect this, I shall note but *two instances* out of the multitude which crowd and throng the voluminous history of our world? Where *now is Babylon?*—once the pride and glory of the Chaldees! That splendid city was once the pride and admiration of the Eastern world. It was rich, powerful, and magnificent. In the extent of its wealth, the splendour of its structures, and the strength of its fortifications, it was unrivalled by any city of antiquity. It is recorded concerning it, that it occupied a circumference of sixty square miles. It was surrounded by a wall on each side, fifteen miles long, eighty-seven feet thick, and three hundred and fifty feet high. To this wall were attached one hundred gates—twenty-five on each side; from these proceeded twenty-five streets, crossing each other at right angles, thus forming the whole into six hundred and twenty-six squares. The gates were of solid brass. Towers also were attached to the walls—three between each gate, and seven at each corner. The celebrated temple of *Belus* occupied a square near the centre of the city, the riches of which alone amounted to ninety-four millions of dollars. Its

vessels and statues were of massy gold. It is unnecessary, however, to adduce further particulars to show the greatness of this city. Suffice it to say, that, according to history, it was one of the mightiest combinations of wealth, strength, and splendour, that the world ever beheld. But where, we inquire, is the glory of Babylon? Where slumbers her power and her grandeur? The same history that records her *glory* reveals her fate. The same hand that unveils her *greatness* points to her obscurity. Even the site of her former magnificence cannot now with certainty be ascertained. It is admitted, however, to be a spot, dreary, desolate, and waste; the habitation of prowling beasts and loathsome reptiles—in every respect gloomy and forbidding. Such is the melancholy fate of one of the greatest cities that ever graced our globe; and such the triumph of time over man's proudest achievements.

Take another instance: Glance for a moment at the history of *Jerusalem*. That city, peculiarly favoured of Heaven—the theatre of the most astonishing manifestations of the Divine power and presence. Surely if any earthly city could withstand the changes incident to this world, it would be the one chosen of God—sacredly and specially consecrated to his service, and bearing his own holy name. Here was the residence of King David, declared by inspiration to be "a man after God's own heart." Here was Solomon's Temple, in which were combined the beautiful, the splendid, and the sublime. Its brazen altars, its golden vessels and candlesticks, and other adornments, amounting to many thousand tons weight of gold and silver, together with the external magnificence of the building, formed an object of unrivalled beauty and splendour. This temple, with all its wealth and beauty, was dedicated unto the Lord. But where is now the glory of Jerusalem, and the splendour of the holy temple? Would not divine power be interposed for their protection and defence? Would not God himself secure his own chosen city from lawless violence or destroying time? No; he ever designed it to be permanent. With all its high privileges and peculiar blessings, it was, nevertheless, a sinful city, and as such, could not be abiding. And from its destruction and desolation, the truth that earth is vanity, and all her cities perishing, is perpetually announced, as in a voice of thunder.

If the Almighty gave up that city, rendered almost sacred by so many hallowed associations, to the ravages of the universal destroyer, what favored spot on all the globe may now hope for his protection? Surely none. *Jerusalem was destroyed:* and the fact is an enduring and eloquent monument, speaking to us, and proclaiming to all generations, the mutability of all things earthly. And for the benevolent purpose of lifting up and fixing the hearts of men and things above—things as enduring as the immortal mind—the truth is uttered as with a thousand tongues. The voice of history speaks it; the word of God teaches it; and

universal observation and experience loudly proclaim it. Yet how slow is man to believe, and how much slower to act as though he believed, the truth so clearly taught. Earth fades from his view, but he perceives it not. The foundation of his hopes and happiness crumbles under his feet, but he feels it not. The prize of immortality glitters before him in the sunbeams of mercy, but he sees it not. But to those who close not their eyes against the light of history, experience, and the *Bible*, the truth of our first proposition must appear abundantly evident. And to those who exercise aright their powers of mind and heart, and improve the grace of God given them, light from eternity breaks forth and reveals the holy city—the continuing city. It is not here. It is yet to come. It is finally to descend from heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, lit up with the glory of God, and vocal with celestial sounds, for the reception of the followers of Jesus.

II. I pass to notice briefly the character of that glorious city, as it is figuratively revealed in the Divine word. It is called a "city of habitations." Abraham, it is said, "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." And again it is said of the faithful, that "they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." But how shall we speak of it? How can I set forth the excellencies of the city of our God? I cannot give you clear ideas concerning it. On this subject, mortal language is too poor to give a clear and full representation. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered the heart to conceive, adequately and clearly, the glories of the Christian's final home. Yet we are not left entirely in the dark: a few rays stream from the sacred world, and faintly illumine the sublime scenery. The beloved John the Divine, on his lonely isle, had a few rich specimens dropt down fresh from heaven, which he has collected and embodied in the form of a description. The outlines given in this description, although brief and general in their character, flash light from the upper world on this alluring subject, and furnish at least an obscure picture of the Holy City.

It is represented as descending out of heaven from God, "Having the glory of God; and its light like unto stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and having a wall great and high, and twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the Children of Israel." Here the strength and security of the city are intimated. Mark ye well her bulwarks: consider her divine fortifications. View her walls of precious stone—her pearly gates, "on golden hinges turning." Her invulnerable battlements—her foundation garnished with all manner of precious stone. But the glorious *light* of this city is another element of its perfect safety and perpetual security. The glory of God doth lighten it, and the

Lamb is the light thereof. Nothing unholy or impure can ever dwell in this light. All who are permitted to dwell within its sacred precincts will be eternally free from everything that can disturb their peace or mar their felicity. "The nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." The light and holiness of heaven must ever prove one of the mightiest guards of security against rude or unholy intrusion. The occupants of that happy world will be guarded from every natural ill, and defended from every spiritual foe. They ever dwell in the milder light of God's approving smile, and the glorious presence of their awful God, as an encircling cloud of rolliug fire, shall shine for the defence and glory of the celestial citadel.

Another attraction is, that it is a commodious and well furnished city. It contains many mansions, spacious apartments, and unfailing crystal fountains. It affords ample accommodation for a multitude of saints and angels, which no man can number. A pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God; and the tree of life spreading wide its branches, and bearing luxuriously its fruits and healing leaves, furnish the citizens with unfailing supplies.

But the beauty and splendour of this city stagger the imagination, and bid defiance to the powers of description. Its magnificence is unique and altogether peculiar. It is a *golden* city. Its streets, its avenues, and all its sacred palaces shine with a transparency like unto clear glass. Its lofty domes reflect celestial rays, and its turrets glitter in the sun-light of unclouded glory.

And the entertainments of heaven, how delightful! The music of that holy city, how charming! It is to be a world of song—a society of the most illustrious and finished performers. Harps tuned to the melodies of the skies—voices harmonized to the new song and the angelic anthems, constitute the celestial choir. Soft notes resound through the blissful apartments: the thrilling strains are wafted melodiously on the balmy breezes. Joy, and gladness, and immortal triumph, are the themes which inspire their tongues and employ their golden lyres. The melody is enchanting. No discord ever mars the music of heaven: it is perfect. It rolls a tide of extatic influence over all the regions of glory, which thrills and enraptures, and charms every susceptibility of the soul.

The climate, too, of that happy world, will be adapted to promote the highest degree of felicity among all its inhabitants. No midsummer's burning beams or blighting winds ever oppress their active faculties. No chilling, cheerless, wintry blast is ever heard or felt. The extremes of heat and cold are unknown. Perfect

health reigns in every system, and blooms on every countenance. A joyous clime of perpetual salubrity, forever, undisturbed by poisonous vapour, pervades all the heavenly region. Odours of Eden —zephyrs perfumed by the flowers of a perennial Paradise, waft their gentle refreshing influence around every dwelling, and along every avenue.

There—"Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more,"

But there—"The rivers of pleasure flow o'er the bright plains,
And the noontide of glory eternally reigns."

The sacred pleasures of the holy city will be greatly enhanced by the kindly dispositions and friendly intercourse of its citizens. The society of heaven is, and ever will be, of the most exalted kind. Patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs—the good and the truly great of all ages and generations will be there. Every pure and noble spirit that ever adorned this dark world will be there. Every one who loved God and virtue here will join that blissful society. The *holy*, the excellent, the truly dignified, from every clime, kindred, and country on the face of the whole earth, will, as if drawn by the irresistible laws of moral attraction, meet at that common centre of light and purity. They will there unite with an unnumbered multitude of holy angels in the employments of the heavenly world.

And these countless numbers of glorified beings shall be of one heart and one mind. No discordant feeling or jarring sentiment ever interrupts the harmony of heaven. They all love, and praise, and serve the Lord. They are all Divinity students. The book of Universal Theology unfolds its ample pages and sheds the light of pure truth all around them. No tiresome process is requisite there. Truth has not to be dug out as an hid treasure, or traced as a fugitive through the dim lights of letters and sentences: it there beams forth from its essential fountain in stereotyped characters of divinity. And none are unemployed there. Not one indifferent spectator in all the heavenly ranks. All gaze and admire, and wonder and adore. Every mind will be divinely fledged for an unwearied uninterrupted flight—a boundless excursion, learning and admiring the works and ways of God forever.

But the highest excellence of this city is its durability. It is a continuing city; an eternal city. It was built for eternity, and not for time. It is fire-proof and time-proof. If, with all its magnificence and indescribable beauty, it were subject to those vicissitudes which attend our earthly cities, it would not be so desirable. But the crowning glory of this city is its eternity. The grand arch-stone of its splendour is that it knows no deterioration. Its foundations were laid by the great Architect of the universe. He designs it *to stand* while endless ages are rolling

onward. He intends it to be as enduring as the immortal inhabitants who occupy it. He designs its existence to be commensurate with his own. And shall his design be frustrated? Shall not God's work stand? What can destroy it? Can floods? or fire? or sword? or principalities or powers? or angels? or devils? or old Time with his wasting scythe? No! Neither powers above nor powers below, can ever move its mighty walls, or shake its firm embattlements. Nor can time ever leave the marks of his decaying fingers on its humble abode. It stands immovably and unchangeably fixed on the base of its own eternity. Its structure proclaims its divinity. It bears inscribed in characters of living light, on its loftiest pinnacles and lowliest dwellings, the ever during impress of immortality.

What a *contrast* does this picture present to our decaying and dilapidated homes and cities in this world! Here, in this vain, changing, and fading world, everything is unstable, fluctuating, and insecure. No inheritance that is permanent—no pleasure uninterrupted by pain—no wealth that is enduring—no happiness that is perfectly suited to the immortal mind. Friends, the nearest and dearest, are in a moment torn away by the ruthless hand of Death. The brightest earthly prospects are blighted in an instant, and the sunshine of hope extinguished by thick clouds of despair. There is no spot on earth where man can fix his residence with the rational hope of permanent bliss. But on heaven's peaceful shore all is glorious, and shall forever be fadeless and changeless. The choice treasures of the universe are there collected, and far above the contamination of sin or the decaying influences of time, they shall remain unharmed forever, an inheritance for saints and angels, indestructible as the throne of God.

This splendid city is the Christian's future home. It is the place he is seeking; and the certain prospect of attaining to its yet unexplored glories, comforts and cheers the Christian pilgrim amid the blasts of adversity and storms of persecution which beat upon him in this world. It is the glorious rest that remains to the people of God, when the storms, and toils, and tumults of mortal life shall be overpast. Well may the Christian say—"Let time fly; let my days and weeks speed their flight—'They'll waft us sooner o'er this life's tempestuous sea.' Let the lying vanities of time cheat those that trust in them: but O, my soul! for ever praise the Lord, that he has revealed unto thee the unfailing treasure—an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and eternal." Perhaps, now you suffer affliction, poverty, reproach—well, endure a little longer, as seeing Him who is invisible. You shall soon exchange your present condition for a brighter, better, happier world.

Those eyes that are now given to penitential weeping, shall shortly be opened on scenes of glory, and every tear be wiped

away. That voice that now supplicates mercy, shall soon join the songs of triumph. That hand that is now doomed to daily toil, shall ere long be made immortal, and taught to strike skilfully a golden harp, whose notes shall swell the anthems of the redeemed.

There are some who will not be persuaded to seek a mansion in that city. They are too busy pursuing the little interests of this world, to think much about the Heavenly Jerusalem. If an angel were to descend from the immediate neighbourhood of God's throne, and paint for them the beauties of this city, in the dialect of Heaven, he could scarcely gain their attention; he could not induce them to forego their petty trifles, and seek a better inheritance. Houses and lands, precarious wealth, sordid pleasures, and deceitful honours, engage their hearts and employ their thoughts. They seem to forget that they have to die. They live as though inspiration had never written—"Here have we no continuing city." They have made choice of a momentary good, and they "strive to think it best." Are there not multitudes that are acting thus? That there are we cannot doubt.

Of such, I would seriously inquire, why do you thus slight your deathless interests? Is it rational? or is it safe? Does it comport with the dignity of your immortal nature, thus to bury all your hopes and fears, your toils and cares, in this clod of earth? Can it render you lasting pleasure? You know it cannot. Will you, then, have a home in Heaven? Will you be persuaded to accept a share in that blessed inheritance? You can have it, "without money, and without price." And do you not feel that you need something more enduring than this world can give? Do you not know and sometimes feel, that the world can never give that which is necessary to satisfy the longing desires of your soul? Well, God your Saviour has purchased a home for your undying spirit, where your every reasonable desire may be gratified.

But permit me to assure you, that it is not in this world. The earth, with all its splendid palaces and stately mansions, its towns and cities, its delightful country seats and pleasant cottages, will ere long be "burned up." When the globe shall be set on fire by the hand of Omnipotence, all its glittering objects of splendour and pleasure will become fuel for the general conflagration. And even now, how precarious are all your earthly possessions, and how changing the scenes of pleasure you "fondly call your own?" And how extremely uncertain all your present enjoyments? What care, anxiety, and toil are constantly requisite to keep your earthly abodes from falling into disorder and confusion. Your garments are waxing old—your substance is decaying—your gold and silver depreciating—your farms are growing up with noxious weeds—and even your barns and storehouses are yielding to the claims of an imperious ever-changing

influence. The very houses in which you live are slowly but surely crumbling into ruins. Everything around you is wasting away, and falling before the corroding touch of all-conquering time. Your earthly possessions are subject, not only to natural and certain decay, but to how many frightful disasters are they constantly exposed? Flood, fire, and tempest, and almost every disorder attending this sin-cursed world, render property exceedingly precarious. Proof positive that this fleeting state is not your home.

And your present life—what is it? To how many terrible accidents and painful diseases is it perpetually exposed? It is short at best, even a vapour. Your bodies may now enclose the seeds of disease which are soon to grow and ripen in death. "The sands of your hour-glass are perpetually dropping out; the ordinary process will soon exhaust it." How often is the silver cord loosed, or the golden bowl broken? They must shortly and certainly yield to the decree of Jehovah, "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." How frequently is the silver cord loosed, or the golden bowl broken, or the pitcher dashed in pieces at the fountain, by the operation of causes which you can neither foresee nor evade? And when death comes, what wilt thou then do? Where wilt thou find a habitation for thy immortal spirit? It cannot decay—it cannot die. If you have no inheritance in Heaven, where, O where, will you find a resting-place, when by the strong arm of the Almighty you are driven from this world? If you are then without a mansion in the city of our God, what will become of you? Where will you find a refuge—where will you take shelter? Ah! there will be no refuge for you, who have no home in Heaven. You shall then be doomed to be a homeless, shelterless, forlorn wanderer on the shores of a miserable eternity, exposed to the pelting storms of Divine wrath forever; or you will then become the wretched inmate of the prison-house of eternal despair, where an impassible gulf will be fixed firmly and forever between you and the faintest gleam of hope and happiness. Be persuaded now to come to Christ; accept his great salvation: then, in the time of your greatest need, you shall have a place and a portion with all the redeemed in the city of our God.

"When shall these eyes thy heaven-built walls
And pearly gates behold?
Thy bulwarks with salvation strong,
And streets of shining gold?
O, when, thou city of my God,
Shall I thy courts ascend,
Where congregations ne'er break up
And Sabbaths have no end?"

THE OLD YEAR AND NEW YEAR.

We have accompanied our readers near to the close of another of the years of our pilgrimage, and the commencement of a new. We cannot but avail ourselves of the occasion to recollect, for our common benefit, that it is wise to talk with our past hours, and prudent to enter thoughtfully upon the uncertainties of a future, which, as it unveils itself and discloses its aspects and allotments, should deeply affect us all. We have read of a lofty mountain in Switzerland, from the top of which the shadow of the traveller is thrown by the setting sun far into the distance on the one side, and by the rising sun far unto the distance on the other, so that looking from this craggy and cloud-crowned pinnacle, he may see his own outline, his shadowy form, floating on mist and vapour, midway between earth and heaven. On such a pinnacle we seem to stand, when an Old Year merges in the Past, and a New opens the portals of the Future. Far far away, hovering over the mists and dim distances of the Past, our own image rises, and is held suspended, fixed, while all beneath and around is floating; palpable and distinctly defined, while all things else are melting into one another, and dissolving into chaos. And if we look to the Future, and strain the eye to catch glimpses of its forthcoming realities, or strive with the ear to detect some distinct utterance amid the confusion of its sounds, which like the mysterious, sad moanings of the sea-shell, awaken curiosity—the only distinct thing that stands forth is the shadow of ourselves, the only clear utterance that strikes the listening ear is the echo of our own. In few words, it is our own character which gives character and interest to the past and future. If our own souls be dark, polluted, and vile, our past is veiled in darkness, and our future is without sunshine or beauty—a region of clouds and storms. There is a power and a principle which can cover the hideous blackness of the past, and throw serene calms, and beams of soft and holy light into all futurity. Need we tell our readers what we must do and be, in order to secure oblivion for years departed and blessedness for all futurity? "*So let us number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom*"—*Ch. Parlour Mag.*

END OF VOLUME TWENTY-NINTH.

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CONTENTS OF VOL. XXX.

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PAGE.

-The Speed of Life Impressing Probation, Isaiah xxxviii. 16,
By Rev. Tryon Edwards, D.D., 5
Family Reform, Genesis xxxv. 4, By Rev. Geo. Duffield, Jr., 15
he Duty of Children to honor their Parents, Exodus xx. 12,
By Rev. David Dobie, 23
God, Nature, Man, in the Light of Christianity, Colossians ii. 3,
By Rev. Roswell D. Hitchcock, D.D., 29
-Christ a Moral Painter, Matt. xiii. 3, By Rev. W. W. Newell, 36
-The Great Sin, Exodus xx. 14, By Rev. William Warren, 48
-God's Wondrous Dealings, Joel ii. 23, 24, 26,
By Rev. G. Thurston Bedell, D.D., 53
The Sacrifice of Praise, Heb. xiii. 15, By Rev. B. C. Smith, 59
-The Religion of Common Life, Matt. vii. 16, By Rev. Hollis Read, 70
—The Preciousness of the Soul's Redemption, Psalm xlix. 8,
By Rev. Richard S. Storrs, D.D., 77
.—Family Worship, Acts x. 2, By Rev. Henry W. Parker, 86
secrated Ministry, By Bishop Potter, 95
-The Resurrection of the Body, John v. 28, 29,
By Rev. Jonathan Brace, 98
The Sources of the Blessedness of Christians, Heb. xii. 22, 24,
By Rev. Richard S. Storrs, D.D., 107
-True Element of Ministerial Devotion and Success, 1 Cor. ii. 2,
By Rev. J. De Forest Richards, 117
—Acquaintance with God, Job xxii. 21, By Rev. Edmund B. Fairfield, 128
pirit of Christ, Rom. viii. 9, By Rev. J. N. Danforth, D.D., 138
.—Life—Its Changes and Lessons, 2 Sam. ix. 3,
By Rev. T. S. Clarke, D.D., 141
.—Fretting: Its Nature, Its Causes, Its Evils, and Its Cure,
's. xxxvii. 8, By Rev. T. S. Clarke, D.D., 150
—Study to be Quiet, &c., 1 Thess. iv. 11, By Rev. T. S. Clarke, D.D., 157
ness and Strength, Amos vii. 2, New-York Observer, 163
.—God's Love in Christ's Mission, John iii. 14, 21,
By Rev. W. A. Scott, D.D., 165
I.—Christ before the world was, John viii. 58,
By Rev. Hollis Read, 173
II.—A Funeral Discourse, Amos iv. 12,
By Rev. David H. Coyner, 183
.—Christ the Head—the Church the Body, Ephesians i. 22, 23,
By Rev. A. T. Chester, D.D., 189
ist All, Col. iii. 11, By Rev. Joseph Smith, 200
ame Man Healed, Acts iii. 13, The Happy Home, 211
e Family Institution—Its Sacredness and Significance,
eremiah xxxi. 1, By Rev. Samuel M. Woodbridge, 213
he Resurrection of Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 17, By Rev. E. F. Rockwell, 224
leventh-Hour Worker, Puritan Recorder, 233
s of pre-eminence, Watchman and Reflector, 235
Lydia's Conversion and its Consequences, Acts xvi. 13, 15,
By Rev. T. S. Clarke, D.D., 238
No Communications from the Dead to the Living, 2 Cor. xii. 1, 4,
By Rev. Thomas L. Shipman, 246
A Faithful Saying, 1 Tim. i. 15, By Rev. Mark Tucker, D.D., 254
It is good for a Man that he bear the Yoke in his Youth, Lam. iii. 27,
By Rev. Joseph McKee, 261
-The Law of Influences, Genesis iv. 9, By Rev. Joseph McKee, 271

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SERMON DCLXVIII.

BY REV. TRYON EDWARDS, D.D.,

NEW LONDON, CONN.

THE SPEED OF LIFE IMPRESSING PROBATION.

O Lord, by these things men live; and in all these things is the life of my it."—Isaiah xxxviii. 16.

'HESE are the words of Hezekiah—a part of his reflections after miraculous restoration from sickness, when the fifteen years been added to his life. Going back, in imagination, to the irs of his suffering, and expressing the emotions that then wded to his mind, he cries out,* "In the cutting off of my s, I shall go to the gates of the grave, and be deprived of the due of my years. No more shall I see God in the land of the ng; I shall behold no more the inhabitants of the world. ie earthly dwelling is plucked up and removed from me, as a pherd's tent; and my life is cut off like a weaver's thread. is wearing me away with pining sickness; from morning till ht he is making an end of me. Mine eyes fail with looking ard. O Lord, I am oppressed—I am weighed down with my rows. Do thou—O do *thou* undertake for me!" And then, his earnest prayer for relief is answered in the announcement he prophet, that he should not die, but still live fifteen years, turns from the plaintive to a joyous strain, and cries out, nd now, what shall I say? How shall I express my deep titude that God has not only promised deliverance, but has sooner promised than he has granted it? I will walk humbly

* Paraphrased from the Hebrew.

before him all the days of my life." And then, passing, in thought, from the divine dealings to their intended spiritual influence, he exclaims, "O Lord, by these things do men live, and in these things is the life of my spirit." Reviewing his sickness, and recognizing in it the hand of God, he felt that the Divine dealings, as sanctified, were promoting his spiritual good; that they had wrought out, and were still working out in him, and for him, their intended design—the intended result of probation. As the physical system lays hold of its proper food, and makes life out of it, so was his heart enabled, by grace, rightly to lay hold of his afflictions, so as from them to make to itself spiritual life—life eternal. And in this sense it is that he exclaims, in all the fulness and certainty of personal experience, "O Lord, by these things do men live, and in these things is the life of my spirit."

That this is not only the intended design, but the actual result of all affliction and trial, every real Christian has felt; for God is too kind and faithful to his children to leave them entirely without it, and its needed discipline; and when it comes, not to sanctify it to their good. But the same is true of the onward progress—of the rapid flight of time, including in its flight what it brings with it, to discipline and mould us for another state. And this, in fact, seems to have been the prominent thought in the mind of Hezekiah. The burden of his monody is not so much the severity of his sufferings, as the brevity of his days—the swiftness of their flight; and even his afflictions, keen and trying as they were, seem most to have impressed him, because they made him so deeply feel that his life was speeding like the wind. This then, is the thought on which I would fix in the passage before us, and to which I would ask your attention, THAT THE SPEED OF LIFE IMPRESSES OUR PROBATION.

The speed of life would not, indeed, *prove* our probation, if there were no other evidence of its reality. But when God has revealed and declared it, as he has done in his Word, then the speed of life—the swiftness of its flight—is fitted most deeply to impress it. This seems to have been the thought of Hezekiah when, o[illegible] the swiftness of time, and of his afflictions as impressing this, h[illegible] declares, "By these things do men live, and in these things is th[illegible] life of my spirit:" that is, that their tendency is to impress [illegible] with the true nature of our earthly state, and to lead us to se[illegible] and secure for ourselves the great ends that God designed in our probation. In this sense it is that we speak of *the speed of life* [illegible] *impressing probation*, loudly admonishing of its nature—deep[illegible]ly impressing its importance—solemnly calling us to improve it. In endeavouring to illustrate this thought, let us notice *first*, the fa[illegible]ct that life is fast speeding away; and *secondly*, that its speed is fitted to impress, and does impress our probation. And,

I. *The* FACT *that life* IS *fast speeding away.*—On this point it is needless long to dwell, for it is a truth that is often pondered [illegible]

the thoughtful heart, suggested as it is by the many changes of life and especially by the opening and closing of successive years. Every one has at times felt, and sometimes deeply felt, with Hezekiah, in the context, that his life is departing, and that he is going to the gates of the grave; or with Moses, that he is carried away as with a flood; or with Job, that his days are swifter than the weaver's shuttle; that his life is as the wind—that as the cloud is consumed and vanishes from sight, so his years are fast passing away. In early youth, time did indeed appear long; and as we looked onward to the future, the hours in their progress seemed but slowly to creep. But the longer we live, the more does it seem short, and the swifter the progress of its flight. Look back one, five, ten, twenty, thirty, or even forty or fifty years, and there fix on some remembered event, and it seems but a moment since it was present. Call up the image of some friend or acquaintance with whom you were then familiar, but who has long since passed to eternity, and it seems but as yesterday, that you walked or talked with him, and gazed upon him face to face. The time when you were but a child, and engaged in childish sports and enjoyments; when you entered on, or when you left the instructions of school; when you lost a father or mother, a brother, or a sister, or a friend; when you left the dear home of your childhood, and entered on the scenes of active life engaging in your chosen business or profession; when you became a husband, or a wife, or a parent! when this joy first lightened your days, or this sorrow, like a dark cloud, threw its chill shadow over your path:—*that time*, it seems but a moment since it was passing; and as you look back to it, and count the days, the months, the years that have intervened, it seems to you like a dream! Where you were busy with the prattle of childhood it may have been exchanged for the hopes of youth. Where you were bright and buoyant with the day-dreams of youth, these may have given way to the anxieties of opening manhood, or the more steady current of settled life. Where you were strong or exultant in the vigour of manhood, the enfeebled step and furrowed cheek may have taken its place, and the silvery hair may have stolen to your brow; and where once the laugh rang loudly from your lips, the sobered—perhaps, the saddened smile—may now slowly creep, while the hoary head, and the stiffening limbs, and the feebler pulse, are whispering of the narrow house!

And yet through all these changes, fast and still faster have your days sped away! Whether joy has brightened your onward course, or sorrow been doing its sad and wearing work upon your heart, swift and still swifter has been their flight. Other wings may weary and droop in their course, but the wings of time, with their calm, steady beat, seem but to gather strength by exertion, and to bear us with a mightier sweep the nearer we are to eternity. Days, weeks, months, years, Sabbaths and communion

seasons—in more and more rapid succession do they pass us, each admonishing, as it flies, that our time on earth is short—that our life is speeding like the wind—that with swifter and still swifter wing we are ever on our way to eternity. This, I believe, is the experience, and the growing feeling of every one who is thoughtful; more and more deeply realized the farther we advance in the pathway of life, and the more steadily and frequently we look on to its close. Such, very briefly, is the speed of life as suggested by the text and its context, of which I remark, as proposed—

II. *That it deeply* IMPRESSES OUR PROBATION. Probation is no less an obvious fact in common life, than a plainly declared doctrine of revelation. On every side, and in ten thousand ways, it is forced upon us that God is trying us—that at every moment, and under every influence of life, we are in a process and progress that is testing and moulding us as moral beings:—*testing* us as to what we will be, and do as subjects of the divine government—*moulding* us to far different realities and results than those that are now about us. The speed of life, the rapid flight of time, is not needed, then, to establish this fact, for it is written, as with the finger of God, and in letters of fire, on all the arrangements of our earthly state; on the inequalities of the world; on its business and its means of grace; on every joy and every sorrow; on every temptation and opportunity, whether for good or evil; on every duty, and privilege, and possiblity of life.

But though the fact of our probation is revealed in God's word, and confirmed by every aspect of daily life, still there are few things that to the thoughtful mind more vividly impress it than the speed of life. And this is fitted to impress, and does impress, our probation upon us, because—

1. *It rarely allows us to complete the plans in which we are engaged.* In a retributive state, if happy, every thing will be complete. There every object will be grasped; every scheme [illegible] fulfilled; every end be attained. There will be no loose [illegible] gathered ends, no unfinished business, which we are forced [illegible] the very progress of our being, to leave before we have done [illegible] them. But every plan will be carried out to completion, [illegible] only left when it shall have fitted into some other which is to [illegible] ceed it, and to which it is but as a means to an end, or a par[illegible] the whole. Completeness is an attribute of retribution.

Here on earth, however, much—I had almost said everyth[illegible] —is left incomplete, from the very speed of time. From obj[illegible] after object, and plan after plan we are torn away by the ra[illegible] flight after days, leaving them, like the structures we may build[illegible] dreams, unfinished in reality. The student has his schemes[illegible] study, and the merchant his intended enterprises of commer[illegible] and the statesman his projects of lofty ambition, which each hop[illegible] to have accomplished, but from which he is forced away by t[illegible]

ed of time, and the urgency of other things that spring up to aand the attention. Where a retributive state would give us ure to go on to the end, and carry out every scheme to its apletion, here we are hurried away from one after another, till whole pathway of life is strewed with their wreck—with the gments of that which we might have finished if our days would have stayed their flight, and waited the bidding of our hes.

Who is there that has not found this so in his own experience; t from youth up has not formed many a plan, neither unwise inconsiderate, which he never even began to execute? Who t has not felt "what mockeries were his wisest plans—his t resolves;"—that

> "To will is ours, but not to execute.
> We map our future like some unknown coast,
> And say, 'Here is a harbour—there a rock—
> The one we will attain—the other shun!'
> And we do neither! Some chance gale springs up,
> And bears us far o'er some unfathomed sea.
> Our efforts all are vain; at length we yield
> To winds and waves that laugh at man's control!"
> "Upon each beckoning scheme
> No sooner do we fix our hope, than still
> Time bears us on, leaving each still undone,
> Adjourned forever!"

And in all this, and in the disappointment it often brings, is of the most impressive admonitions of the fact of our proba-n—that this is not our ultimate state, but only one of trial, of cipline, of formation and preparation for another. And deep d impressive as is the lesson, it is the speed of life that has it.

It is further true that the speed of life impresses the great fact our probation, because

2. *By the rapidness of its flight it keeps us always in effort*—t only is it true that the speed of life allows but few if any of r schemes to be fully completed, but it ever keeps us in earnest d toilsome labour to accomplish even the little we actually do. rried as we are, by its flight, from object to object, and plan plan, it tasks alike our time and powers to do but little upon h that we undertake. And even this little, if we do it with might, soon wears upon our life, so that our work often ishes us before we finish it—wearing away the very strength would put forth to effect it—the very life we would expend to omplish it. Pursuit is the prevalent, the universal law of th; effort, the uniform condition of attainment; conflict and uggle, the permanent lot of humanity. "All things," says lomon, "are full of labour." In a retributive world, like that which we are hastening, this state of things could not exist. ere will be the attainment of results—not the mere struggle for

them; there the joy and thankfulness of reception—not the toilsome effort of acquisition. And yet this toil, this effort, this ever-living struggle would not be ours, were it not for the speed of life, which compels us to be constantly active if we would accomplish anything of moment, or save even the least of time's floating treasures from the rolling flood. And as every toilsome struggle and conflict and effort is probationary, both in the discipline it gives, and the state which it indicates, the speed of life which throws them upon us, loudly proclaims and deeply impresses our probation.

Still further does the speed of life impress our probation, because—

3. *By its rapid progress, it gathers more thickly about us the changes and trials and admonitions of life.*—To say nothing of the fact that in a retributive state these would be unknown, the rapid flight of time brings them near to each other and crowds them, as it were, in masses upon us. If the changes of the world were the incidents only of centuries; if the trials and sorrows of our short life on earth, were spread out over the surface of thousands of years; if warning and startling providences were comparitively strange things, bursting upon us like the explosions of long buried volcanoes, only at intervals of ages; if friends were cut down, and graves were opened only at long distant periods—if all these things were so, easily might we forget our probation, rarely feeling its discipline—rarely being reminded that here was not our rest—that we were not to abide here forever.

And yet all these things would be so, were it not for the speed of life. This it is, that by its rapid progress, gathers about us, and as it were, presses upon us, one after another, all these means of discipline—these divinely appointed agents of probationary work. This it is, that in hasty and ceaseless succession, crowds on the changes that take place about us; that so often sends tears to the eye, and grief to the heart; that bears away friends from our side, and opens the grave at our feet, and peals to our ears the warnings of providence, and the startling admonitions of the judgment. The swifter the speed of life, the more trying appears its disciplinary work, because it compresses that work within proportionally narrower limits; and thus, in its pathway of sadness and tears, it the more loudly preaches of probation, and the more solemnly impresses it. In a retributive state, there are no such changes of sadness—no trials, or sorrows, or separations, or graves: and the fact that they are *here*, and that the speed of life brings them about in such rapid succession, reminds us, as if by a voice from heaven, that here is our probation. Passing by several other thoughts of deep interest on this point, on which time forbids us to dwell, I remark but once more, that the speed of life impresses its probationary nature, because

4. *It so soon hurries us away from earthly scenes, and that, too, in the full vigour and activity of all our powers and faculties.*—To moral beings, every temporary state is of course probationary to something beyond itself—to something for which it is designed to prepare them; and the speed of life is continually reminding us that here we are to stay but a little while. But not only in thus showing the temporary nature of our stay on earth—not only in hurrying us from plan after plan, and object after object, and by keeping us constantly in effort, and by gathering thick upon us the changes and admonitions of providence, does the speed of life speak loudly of probation, but it often brings us to the end of our course in the full vigour of all our faculties; tearing us from our work just as we are best able to do it, and from our possessions just as we are ready to enjoy them. How often is the statesman cast down in the full maturity of his talents and influence; and the man of business, just as he is qualified, by long practice and success, to enter on the largest plans; and the christian student, or minister, when, by the thorough discipline of years, he is just giving promise of being able, with polished intellect and ripened piety, richly to serve his generation by the will of God! The votaries of honour, the servants of usefulness, the idols of affection are cast down, and those who stand as pillars of the state totter and fall in their full strength. Each seems but just ready, by long experience and the full training of his powers, to lay hold on some long sought prize, when he is summoned to the narrow house, and to all that is beyond it!

Now if the reverse of all this were true—if our powers were exhausted before, or with our work, the case would be widely different. But so far is this from being the fact, that often does the flight of time bring us to the end of life, just as he have learned how to begin to live; when our experience is such that we feel that now, were we to live life over again, we should know how to live to some purpose: or when our faculties are matured, and our powers disciplined; or when, as the result of a life time of labour, we are just ready to say to ourselves, "Soul, thou hast much goods, laid up for many years—take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry"—little dreaming that the next sound that greets the ear may be, "This night thy soul shall be required!" Thus it is, that the speed of time cuts us off from life just as we are prepared for its scenes—just as earth's discipline has done its work upon us—just as we are ready for its enjoyments, and matured and fitted for its struggles, its activities, and its conflicts. And thus we are pointed to another state, where all these faculties shall find their appropriate sphere and objects, and where all this discipline shall tell on endless duties and results in the paradise of God above.

Such are some of the thoughts suggested by our text: that our life is fast speeding away, and that the swiftness of its flight

deeply and solemnly impresses the reality and design of probation; that by breaking in upon our plans, and tearin away from one after another, before we complete them; tha keeping us always in effort; by gathering about us the chan and trials, and admonitions of providence; and by hurryin away from present scenes just as we are best prepared fo that they demand of us, and pressing us on to, and over verge of eternity, just as we are best disciplined for the strug and conflicts of time—that by all these things, it continu admonishes of our probation, and that here we are every weaving, thread by thread, and line by line, the garments of immortality—the white robe in which, through grace, we a stand without fault before the throne of God, or the fire-she woe that is to wrap our lost spirits in perdition forever!

In all our argument, thus far, we have alluded to retribu only as blessed. With, if possible, deeper, as well as with da truth, would the thought of the text stand out before us, wer to dwell on the retribution of despair, where the seed of sin s have brought forth its harvest of wrath, and the mis-s probation of time shall have sunk the undying spirit to t depths of perdition where "their worm dieth not, and their is not quenched," and "the wrath of God is poured out witl mixture," and "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for and ever!" But leaving the subject to your serious reflecti I close with a few remarks which it suggests. And

1. *If the speed of life is always admonishing of probation, it should also admonish us of our coming retribution.* Every that passes—every rising morn, and beaming noon, and clo night—every beating pulse, and heaving breath, and stri hour, and ticking moment, should be speaking to us of ete things—of those endless states of joy or woe on which so soo must enter. And so with every unfinished plan, and to effort, and passing change of life: there is not one of them should not remind us of the future scenes to which they bearing, and for which they are moulding us. Every on them, as the commissioned messenger of God, should speak t of eternity and its results; and should make us thoughtful serious, leading us, at every hour, to live as though it migl the crisis of our existence—as though on it were hanging destinies of endless ages. Yes—it is true—and the speed o should ever be impressing it, that, as we are *in* probation, s are *passing to* retribution, and that here we are forming ourse as moral beings, for what we must be hereafter, and shapin ourselves our own endless prospects. Every one of us, on e is doing an amazing work; and its final results in eternity, be of our own procuring. In all that work, indeed, God s us our position, and surrounds us with motives, and offers u

truth, and his sympathy, and the aids of his Holy Spirit. But there he leaves us! The work [illegible] and he will not perform it. The warfare is ours: and only we can do it. The seed we now sow, we are sure to reap: and to receive, is to bear it, whether it shall be a harvest of glory, or of death—whether we will work out our salvation or perdition. And when we shall have done our probationary work, and thus been thoroughly and fairly tried—when virtue and vice, right and wrong, heaven and hell have been before us, and again, and again, and through all probation, we have been choosing, and repeating our choice of the one or the other, then it is right that God shall say to us in eternity, "You have formed your own character, and now wear it forever; you have chosen your own destiny and now abide it forever!" And this is just what he will do at the judgment, and we shall feel that it is just; and the wide universe, in view of the decision, shall cry out, "Amen!" And if by that decision, we are condemned as having wasted probation, our mouths will be forever stopped!—And as the speed of life reminds us of our coming retribution, so,

2. *It should lead each one of us seriously and habitually to prepare for it.* As retribution is the necessary result of probation, and takes its character entirely from it, we should improve *the whole* of the latter in diligently preparing for the former. We are far too prone to think and speak of preparation for death as a distinct and separate business, entirely apart from the common course of life, and proper to be undertaken when death is supposed to be close at hand, just as we often speak of preparation for a journey, as not only easily made, but best and most properly made just as we are about to commence it. It is true, indeed, that in some cases, as in that of the dying thief, for example, one may, through grace, be prepared for death, even in a dying hour. But such cases are exceptions, and not the rule either of our safety or duty: *a single one* being given in the entire history of the gospel, that none may despair; and *but one*, that none may presume.

But the great principle of God's word is, that *the whole of probation* is the season of *preparation for retribution;* and that what is to follow death, will depend, not *on the act of dying* but *on the life we have lived before we came to it.* The bed of death may indeed be, and *is* the most proper time to prepare for *the act of dying*—for closing up our worldly business; and taking leave of friends; and, like the departing Stephen, commending our souls to a faithful Redeemer. But it is not the time—the *divinely appointed* time to be resolving to forsake the sins and vanities of the world, just as they are forsaking us: for setting about to amend the future life, when there is no future to amend—for beginning to sow the seed, just as the harvest is to be reaped; for determining to work out salvation, when to multitudes it is

too late to be saved !* The only truly wise or safe preparation for death, is, *to be always living a faithful christian life*—the only sure preparation for retribution, to be glorifying God in every part of probation, and improving it all, in loving and serving him. And the flight of time admonishes us to be always diligent in doing this, for we know not when the Son of Man may come ! In view of our subject, again,

3. *It is no wonder that this world does not satisfy the soul.* Every thing in our moral nature, and in the structure of our earthly state, proclaims that we were made for immortality ; and we cannot be fully satisfied with any thing short of it. The world cannot feed us, any more than the husks could the prodigal. If we *fail* to grasp it—if our plans are blighted, and our schemes overthrown by the swiftness of time's flight, then we are dissatisfied through the want and disappointment ; or, if, on the other hand, we grasp to the full, all we have desired, then we are like the Macedonian, weeping for other worlds to conquer—feeling that the utmost we have, does not satisfy and feed the soul ; does not meet the cravings of our immortality, which like an undying hunger or thirst are ever upon us.

Such being your nature, if you have never sought your portion in God and his service, it is no wonder that in your thoughtful hours, you are often sad, and feel within you a void that the world can never fill. And forever you *will* feel it—for it is the instinct of your immortality—forever you will feel it till in God's favor you find that bread of heaven that shall satisfy your hunger, and that water of life that shall quench your thirst. Yes—my immortal hearer, away from Christ and holiness, you must, from the very structure of your nature, be wretched, like one forever dying of famine, but never dead—like one tormented by an ever increasing thirst, and yet without one drop of water to quench it. Here, in this world, I grant that you may partially, and for a season, meet these wants. You may keep from utter starvation by feeding on the husks of time and sense ; or in part slake your thirst at the impure fountains of sin, though it will be like drinking from the poisoned cup, which satisfies for the moment, to destroy in the end. But when you pass to eternity, and there find even these streams cut off, and these husks torn from you, then will you not hunger forever, with no bread to feed you, and thirst forever, without one drop of water to cool your tongue ? Will not these desires, ever gathering strength, and never—*never* satisfied, be the unquenchable flame, and the undying worm to you ? Finally,

1. *If time is so fast flying, and life so fast speeding away, then your probation will soon be ended, and your retribution soon begun.* Now you have sabbaths, and sermons, and communion

* See Whately's Future State, Lecture xii.

seasons, and all the means of grace, each, by the love of Christ, appealing to you, and each waiting, like some commissioned angel of mercy to bear you to the skies. Every one of them God has given for your salvation. By them, through his grace in Christ Jesus, you may live; and in them all, find the life of your spirit. But soon they will be over; and soon out of them, by your improvement or misimprovement, you will have made life or death eternal for yourself. Soon will all these *means* be gone. The flight of time will have borne them away, as on the wings of the wind. And then results—*results*—RESULTS, will be all that remains to you forever! Now, *means* are yours, and *possibilities* yours, either for life or death—for heaven or hell. But soon *unchanging certainties* shall come—results which must be the atmosphere of your endless existence—the robing of your spirit forever! See to it—O see to it, through the offered grace of Jesus, that they are such, that in them you shall rejoice, and not mourn to endless ages!

SERMON DCLXIX.

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FAMILY REFORM.

"And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hands, and all the earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem."—GENESIS XXXV. 4.

THE Patriarch was now on his way to Bethel. More than twenty years had elapsed, and these the most important of his life since he bade it farewell. Of all places in the world, this to him was the dearest. Neither the valley of Gerar, nor Beer-sheba, nor Padan Aram itself, had equal power to awaken in his heart such profound and grateful recollections. There he had been made to feel that the great Jehovah was not only willing to be the "Sun," and "Shield," and "exceeding great reward" of Abraham, and of Isaac, but of JACOB also. He himself had given to the place the name of "Bethel," and well did he remember the heavenly dream and apparition—the ladder stretching from earth to heaven—the angels ascending and descending upon it—that made to him this highly favored spot, "none other than the house of God," and "the gate of heaven."

Time had wrought great changes with Jacob, and changes in many different respects. *Then* he was a fugitive from his brother Esau, who for his unworthy and unpardonable duplicity, in twice robbing him of his birth-right, was ready to pursue him to the death. *Now*, in answer to the prayer when he wrestled with God and prevailed, he, and his deeply offended brother had been reconciled. That affection which once lost, is harder to be won than a strong city, he had again recovered, to enjoy its protection and delight in its most cordial manifestation. *Then* he had taken of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and there on the cold hard ground, unprotected alike from the passing robber and the wandering beast of prey, he had found himself in circumstances as truly desolate and forlorn, as it is possible for the mind to conceive. *Now* God hath "set the solitary in families." The wanderer has found a home. *Then*, with all the anxieties of a young and inexperienced man, entering on the world for himself, "he had vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God." *Now*, God has been to him all,and more than all that he desired. The man "has increased exceedingly, and has much cattle, and maid-servants and men-servants, and camels and asses." *Then* as a memorial of his vow he had set up a stone for a pillow, and said, "This stone which I have set for a pillow, shall be God's house, and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee." *Now* he comes once more to Bethel—only because God had reminded him of his vow.

In no respect was he to blame for leaving Padan-Aram. It was right that he should wish to leave a father-in-law who had so cruelly deceived him in the object of his affections, who had ten times changed his wages, and who with all the tenderness he professed for his daughter, we have reason to fear had too much avarice in his heart to allow room for parental love. It was right that he should leave the neighbourhood of Laban's sons, whose envy and jealousy steadily increased just in proportion to their brother-in-law's greater prosperity. It was also right that he should be influenced by the indignant appeal of Laban's daughters. "Are we not accounted of him strangers? Hath he not sold us and quite devoured our money?" Above all, the reason assigned by Laban himself, "Thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longest after thy father's house,"—who can fail to appreciate the excellence of this reason? But first, and most of all, and better than all other motives, would have been, a return to Bethel—*to fulfil his vow*.

Alas! for the infirmity of our disobedient and ungrateful nature! Haran for the time seems to be forgotten, and Bethel too, for the pleasant city of Shechem. There he pitches his tent

and buys a piece of ground. It is said that he erected there an altar, and called it after the name of the God of Israel. But of little value is family worship, unaccompanied by family government. "Dinah the daughter of Leah which she bare unto Jacob," "has a disease in her eyes as well as her mother"—"and goes out to see the daughters of the land." Observing their manners, and customs, and fashions, and beginning in the seemingly harmless desire to see and be seen, her curiosity is at length indulged at the expense of her virtue, and her peace of mind for life.

One family affliction is added to another. "Ye have troubled me," said he to his sons (after they in their revenge for the dishonor done to their sister, had smitten the city with the sword) "among the inhabitants of the land, and I, being few in number they shall gather themselves against me, and I shall be destroyed, I and my house."

God, however, is better to him than his fears. "Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fledst from the face of Esau, thy brother."

But how startling and unexpected are the terms in which the patriarch repeats the order thus given him by the Almighty God of his fathers! Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, "Put away the strange gods that are among you and be clean, and change your garments, and let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went." "And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hands, and all the earrings which were in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem."

With this introduction, which seemed necessary to our design, in giving a general description of the *father* of a family, we come now to the subject naturally suggested by our text, viz., FAMILY REFORM.

Other reforms, or at least pretended reforms, many of them, we have recently had in great abundance. National reforms! state reforms! municipal reforms! educational reforms! moral reforms! How multiplied their organizations! How eloquent their orators! How elaborate their reports! How prolific their presses! How short lived their glories! and how disappointing their results!

To so great an extent has the reforming disposition prevailed among the community, determinedly and at once to amend that which is vicious, corrupt and depraved, that the favorite and most familiar name with many for the times in which we live, is "THE AGE OF REFORM." Even the Church itself, her holy nature, her original design, and her most significant history alike forgot-

ten, has been regarded by them, simply as a great moral and political engine, for this especial purpose.

Very unfortunate however has been the disadvantage at which her power in this respect has been applied. One fundamental maxim with her is, that *truth* is an all essential pre-requisite to any improvement that is genuine or permanent. But the source on which they rely for truth is not that on which she relies, viz. Revelation. Her light is that of the Son: brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Theirs, the doubtful radiance of some miserable ignis fatuus, its blaze more brilliant and active just in that proportion in which the morass is the wider, the more corrupt, and the deeper. A second maxim with her is that the church and the state alike are only to be reached effectively through the FAMILY, which is the true basis of each. But here again there is no agreement whatever between the followers of Christ, and those who hold that marriage is merely a civil contract; that a parent is not responsible for the religous education of a child, and that the true philosophy of society is that which regards it simply as an aggregate of individuals.

The very name of *family* reform therefore may appear to such persons as if we were suggesting a new reform, whereas this method is as old as the days of Seth, as the calling of Abraham: as old as Noah and his ark that outrode the deluge: the great method in which God has seen fit to reform the race from the very beginning. Other modes of reform begin at the topmost bough where they are at least the most conspicuous. Here they strip a few leaves; there they lop a few branches; occasionally they may peel the bark from a goodly size bough: but seldom or ever do they even touch the trunk! Family Reform, however goes at once to the lowest *root*. It lays its wise and divinely commissioned hand directly upon the germ of the evil that needs to be reformed. It does not devote all its time and attention to Simeon, and meanwhile forget Levi: or to Levi, and in the same manner overlook Dinah. It begins with the parental heart itself and developes from within, outward. It seeks out the strange gods: it takes away the effeminate and idolatrous earrings: it buries them where they will never be found again. Its reform is not an apparent healing on the surface, but a permanent cure. Where the family is safe, the state is safe, and the church also.

But to the case in hand. Jacob, we have seen, like many another commenced the struggle of life under circumstances of great destitution and embarrassment. It was a long way to look forward to the time when he would have achieved a competence or gained an independence. Would a merciful Providence so far favor him as to give him bread to eat, and raiment to put on? Would he enable him to come again to his father's house in such a manner as to need nothing from him but his affection? Would he prosper the work of his hands, and give him the desires of his

heart in all those respects in which it was lawful for him to cherish them—O! how good a man would he be. "Then shall the Lord be my God." How generous would he be in paying back to God the interest on the principal that had thus been loaned. "Of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee!" How many others are there, who, if they have not formally made such *a vow*, have passed at least through a very similar process of thought and feeling!

Behold Jacob next in Padan Aram. Instead of a nephew he becomes a servant, and that to an uncle who was the hardest of all masters. "Thus I was," said he, "in the day, the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from mine eyes." Was any thing torn of beasts? he bore the loss of it? Was it stolen by day or stolen by night? of his hand was it required. Ten times his wages were changed, but still he labored on. Oppression did not break his indomitable spirit.

Meanwhile he is most cruelly disappointed in his affections. He becomes the victim of craft and avarice, and his domestic peace is seriously interfered with for life. What with care abroad and trouble at home, neither his piety, nor his happiness appear to keep equal step with his progress in wealth. As he was not the first man, so he was by no means the *last*, who, in the bitterness of his soul, has made the discovery that other things are necessary to constitute happiness besides wealth: that even gold itself may be bought too dear. In his anxiety after the temporal interests of his family, he is not so careful as he should be in reference to their moral and religious welfare. "While men slept the enemy sowed tares," says the parable, and would that Jacob's was the only family to which we have occasion to apply it. In the country we have sometimes seen a man neglect his garden so much for the sake of his fields, that when at length he has endeavored to rid it of accumulated weeds, all his efforts have proved ineffectual, because too late. So does a man often times neglect his family for his business—but the tares are sowing thick and fast, and the crop becomes a doubtful one indeed.

Thus it was with Jacob. *Now* all his solicitude is about the speckled and spotted and brown cattle: again, all his thoughts are occupied about "the ring-streaked and grisled." The great question of his life during this period seemed to have been—How can I prevent this cunning Laban from overreaching me? When shall I provide for mine own house also? I fear that this was much too often the tenor of his conversation with his beloved Rachel! It was not about Bethel, and the vow he had made there. These he had evidently forgotten. It was not about his grandfather Abraham; how God had called him out of idolatrous Ur—and what a wonderful covenant he had made with him, and confirmed to Isaac, that in him should all the nations of the earth be blessed. It was not about the high encomium once passed by

the Lord on him, who, on this account, was so well worthy to b called "the Father of the Faithful." "I know him that he wi command his children and his household after him, and they sha keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment!" No won der therefore that Rachel still clung tenaciously to her househol gods, and continued to use them for purposes of superstition an divination. No wonder that other "strange gods" from time t time found their way into his family among his children and d mestics. No wonder that the use of earrings as amulets or charm formed into idolatrous symbols, had made the children of Jaco little better than Terah and other of their ancestors in the land o the Chaldees.

It is indeed painful and humiliating in the extreme to come t such conclusions in reference to the family of the Patriarch; vow made under such awfully solemn circumstances and y forgotten! strange gods where no other than the true God shoul have been tolerated—ignorance of the corrupt practices of h family, or if not a wilful conniving at them—after finding th images in Rachel's possession, still permitting them to remain- IDOLS IN THE HOUSE OF JACOB, who would have believed it possibl What would Abraham have said? and good old Isaac? Wh must Jacob himself have *thought* when he once more came to hi senses in this matter? Where was his apology or excuse? Bet el and his vow! His wealth and the idols in his house, ho great and melancholy such a contrast! We think of Eli at later day, "whose sons made themselves vile, and he restraine them not!" We think of David, who "had never displease Adonijah at any time in saying, *Why* hast thou done so?" It i not of the difficulty of such a reformation that we think the most it is the fact that in the houses of such good men, there shoul exist an unequivocal *necessity* for this species of reformation.

Now, just in proportion as we are not as good as they, is the not reason to fear lest in the multiplicity of our cares and bus ness, the "strange gods" may have crept into our houses also

Taking the word of God as our guide, and searching our house with it, as with a lighted candle, how few comparatively will b the "dwellings of Jacob" among us in which we shall not fin some idols concealed about the stuff? Could we, for the tim being, lay aside pride and that besetting sin of the flesh, sel gratification—could we each deal with ourselves as plainly an faithfully as we feel disposed sometimes to deal with one another- how unhesitating and almost universal would be the admission- that the time for the great work of family reform has now full come!

We need a reform in the *government* of the family.

The time was, in the history of our country, when the fath was both the king and the priest, in his household. When h *commanded*, the thing was done: when he threatened, th

punishment came. His authority was absolute and supreme. But now the very first trait in our national character that is noticed by the stranger who arrives on our shores, is the universal prevalence of filial disobedience. Account for the fact as we will, it cannot be denied that the race of worldly-minded fathers and mothers is alarmingly on the increase. Hence the multitude of children who bring their parents to shame! and bring down their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

We need a reform in the *education* of the family.

This turning over the child entirely to the secular teacher for six days in the week, and to the sabbath-school teacher on the seventh is as common as it is pernicious. If the education of the child and the character of the man, stand in almost the same relation as cause and effect, and if it be a true maxim, that domestic education can never be safely supplanted by any other, it is high time for us to see how far these principles are lost sight of!

We need a reform in the *spirit* of the family.

"Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come from the North! where is the flock that was given you, thy beautiful flock?" What with the "evil eye" of him who hasteth to be rich, which to such a lamentable extent has taken the place of the eye of faith?—what with the abounding iniquity that prevails, by which the love of many have been made "to wax cold: what with the tenth wave of our material progress, overwhelming for the time being every thing like a similar progress in spiritual affairs—it certainly is the fact that the *spirit* of the family is much more frequently that of the world, than of Christ. Hence multitudes of the children of the church have already "gone into captivity before the enemy;" and if this spirit be not changed, they will be speedily followed by multitudes more.

We need a reform in the *literature* of the family.

Of the twelve millions of volumes annually sent forth from the American press, "ONE SIXTH part are NOVELS and TALES, while the proportion of fictitious to solid reading in France, is only *one-sixteenth!* Books are now read by those pretending to be modest, whose every page should make their faces crimson with shame, and under the poor pretence of classic taste and the cultivation of the fine arts, pictures and engravings are found upon our parlour tables, that would have better adorned the walls of Sodom and Gomorrah. Let any parent gather the dream books from under the pillow, the novels from the secret drawer, and he will know something of the shame of Jacob when he found the "strange gods" that had been collected in his household. If any where, the work of family reform should commence *speedily*, surely it is here!

Above all we need a reform in the *religion* of the family.

If there are any two laws of the kingdom plainer than these, we know not what they are; first that the children of those who have believing parents are those who are ordinarily made the subjects of converting grace; secondly, that these are for the most part converted during the period of youth. If they are not brought in in their youth, the fearful probability is that they *will never be brought in at all.* "Every man in religion is really, what he is *relatively*," said Philip Henry, himself a model in this respect, than which perhaps we could select none better. And Richard Baxter used to think, "that if family religion was fully discharged, the preaching of the word would not long remain the general instrument of conversion." With the history of Kidderminster before us, who can dare to say that he was mistaken?

Family reform may be difficult: we frankly admit that of all others it is the most so; but then on whom shall we lay the blame except ourselves? Doubtless it was difficult to Jacob. Not readily, not without remonstrances, were the idols parted with: not without regret were the earrings buried under the oak, by the other part of the family, *but it was done, nevertheless;* Jacob with all his imperfections of character, was still a true child of God, and this was the unerring test—that when duty was fairly set before him, he did not dare to do otherwise than obey! And now behold the result! "And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities round about, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob." So true is the word of the Lord. "Them that honor me I will honor." If the religion of the closet, like "the ointment of the right hand that bewrayeth itself," is "rewarded openly;" much more so is family religion. To use a familiar illustration, you might as well expect to have light and water in your dwellings without making the proper connection with the pipes in the street, leading from the reservoirs, as to expect that the religion of the church will do good to your families without the religion of home. The family is a divine institution as well as the church. To merge the one in the other is popery, and infidelity, and heathenism. Only when the family is regarded as the nursery of the church, do we observe the true order of things as appointed by God himself. Never shall we make the house of God, a "Bethel;" never shall we make our own houses worthy of the name, as tabernacles of Jacob, until we put forth a strong and prayerful effort, and take away "the strange gods" that are among us! Then may we hear the watch-word, "Arise and go to Bethel!" nor hear that call in vain!

SERMON DCLXX.

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THE DUTY OF CHILDREN TO HONOR THEIR PARENTS.

"Honor thy Father and thy Mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."—EXODUS xx. 12.

THE Apostle Paul has called our attention to the fact that this is the first of the Ten Commandments with a promise attached to it; and he urges the fact of the promise as the reason why children should be careful to obey it. The promise is a long life. Is it not remarkable, is it not worthy of the attention of all children, that such a promise is attached to this commandment? Does it not show that God places a high value on obedience to parents, and that even children are under his government; their actions noticed, their obedience rewarded, and their disobedience punished? Nor should children ever forget the circumstances in which this commandment was at first given. It was first given on that wonderful day when God came down on Mount Sinai, amid thousands of angels—amid clouds and fire and smoke, and the voice of mighty thunderings, to give his people Israel a law, by which all their thoughts, words, and actions, were to be governed. This may serve to impress our minds with the solemnity and importance of this commandment—"Honor thy father and thy mother."

Before entering on the specific design of this discourse, which is to show what it is to honor father and mother, and to insist on the duty of children towards their parents, it may be proper to make a few remarks on the commandment itself. And, First,

This Commandment is not intended solely for those who are commonly called children. It is generally supposed to be intended for such, and for such only. But it is a mistake. For, as you well know, it was announced in the presence of all Israel, and like all the other nine commandments, it was intended for the heart and conscience, and outward obedience of every Israelite without exception. It was intended for the old, as well as the young. Many of the people who stood around the Mount and heard the voice of God uttering this law, had parents buried in Egypt. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the parents of the whole nation lay in Hebron, in the land of promise, to which they were then going. But what of that? Though those venerable and holy men had for many long years slumbered in the dust, their children were still under the most solemn obligations to honor them. If you ask *how*, we answer, they could honor their memories, they could steadfastly remember their instructions, and follow their example, in the worship and service of Jehovah, the true God; they could keep

themselves separate from the polluted Canaanites of the land in which they were about to dwell; they could conscientiously maintain the faith in which their parents had lived and died; and thus doing, they would both glorify God and honor their parents though now no longer among the living. Hence this is a commandment as truly for the old as the young—during all the days of their life. It might with all propriety be chosen as the text of a sermon addressed to elders, senators, and men of gray hairs and venerable character, with as much propriety as any text whatever. The commandment itself is binding on all men, of all ranks and conditions—as long as they live.

A second remark is—that this commandment is given in favor of all parents. This is a remarkable fact. All parents are not such in character as to render them worthy of honor: but notwithstanding, there is no exception here made. Some parents are profane: some are prayerless; some intemperate; some fearfully wicked; some have no fear of God before their eyes; and some openly refuse all reverence towards his commandments. They disregard the Bible, the Sabbath, and the Sanctuary; they neglect all religious duties; they set at nought all the terrors of the judgment, and neither pray for their own souls nor the souls of their children. Many parents are cruel to their children and treat them with hardly any parental affection. And yet when God speaks to all children touching their feelings and conduct towards their parents, he makes no exception. What he says to one, he says to all: "Honor thy Father and thy Mother." He thus throws the shield of his protection over all parents, whatever may be their character. How solemn is the position of a parent! with what dignity God invests it in the eyes of all men! A child may not dishonor a cruel and wicked parents, without incurring the displeasure of God!

A third remark, very obvious, is, that here is a commandment for all children. It is indeed for both old and young; but the young especially: for all that are old enough to understand it; for the children of the rich and the poor; the children of slaves, and the children of the greatest of earthly kings; children in christian, and children in heathen lands. God sends forth his commandment to them all; he addresses them all in the same terms, with the same august authority, making over to them the same divine promise. Whether born of a prince or of a peasant—in the palaces of nobles, or in the humble cottage of the poor—in christian or in pagan lands, if children obey this holy precept they will obtain the blessing and rejoice in the favor of God. This conducts us therefore to the first grand division of our discourse.

I. *What is it to honor parents?* In answer to this question, we say, 1. To honor parents is to *obey them* in all that is right when they require it. Said a young man, to one who was at the

ent enticing him away into the paths of sin and shame: "I ised my mother, before I came to New York, that I would the Bible, worship God on the Sabbath day in the church, out of bad company, and never go to the theatre; and I d to keep my promise." Here was honor to a parent, which ost earnestly commend to all youth, when they leave home ie city, if it be for only one week. If you go only for a day, any great city, act on the principles of that pure-hearted g man. Avoid the ten thousand snares there laid for the ortal souls of the unwary. Come not within the first eddies of 'hirlpool of perdition which Satan has there created. Stand from the theatre, the gilded saloon, the midnight haunts of impure and debauched. Keep your soul with all diligence. or your parents by conduct without reproach, and a reward follow close upon your obedience, for God himself is pledged stow it. We say,

To honor parents is to do what is right, whether they require not. Parents cannot have foresight to command everything is right. They cannot follow their children every night into closets, and tell them that prayer is right. They cannot w them everywhere on the Sabbath, and tell them to keep that d day holy. They cannot be present in every place, where children are tempted to do evil, and tell them not to engage But children can always do what is right; they can always the commandments of God; they can be truthful; they be kind; they can govern their tongues and their tempers; can refrain from all vice; they can keep the Sabbath holy; can avoid all profanity; they can pray; they can read the , and act according to its principles, and so doing, they do just what their parents will delight to see them do; their nts will feel honored in their conduct; and the world ng on will say, "These children are an honor to their nts." It is a strange, yet well ascertained fact, that the ght, conscientious and pious conduct of a child is universally at once regarded as reflecting honor on its parent. Probably because of the strong and infallible impression that the ence and example of the parent must in some way have uced that conduct. But certain it is, that if a child conducts elf nobly, the honor redounds at once to his parent, as thing in which he has an important share. We say,

To honor their parents, children must have respect to their ngs in reference to the choice of companions or of a profession. h are very prone to choose companions and even professions ife, without so much as even considering the feelings of father and mother. This is all wrong. Parents feel such uct very keenly, because it is disrespectful to them in the est degree—and pours bitterness into their souls. It proves their child has no regard for their feelings—no reverence

for their judgment or authority, and no confidence in their will. It proves on the part of the child, a self-will, a wa filial affection, and even a disregard of his parents, w foreshadows nothing good. Children who act on their responsibility in such grave and momentous matters, se aside the feelings of their father and mother, can fin apology for their conduct, neither can they rationally exp blessing to attend them in the business of life. We say,

4. Finally, to honor their parents, children must endeav act on all occasions so as not to make their parents ash of their conduct. Every parent by nature and the instincts of affection, cannot but feel honored in the hono and praiseworthy conduct of his children. It is a most pre balm to his life—a sweet and never failing solace to his when, with conscious pride, he can look on his children, a under the fear of God, and with a steady purpose of doing what is right. But on the other hand, when parent ashamed of the reputation and doings of their children—v for some deeds of infamy or rashness, they cannot me their names, but must needs let their memory be forg what solace will you now find for their grief. For the bitte of death, there is a relief and a balm, which never fails to comfort to the soul; but for the bitterness of children's sh there is no consolation among men. It is more bitter than itself, and often will the agonized parent declare, that it had easier to have carried his child to the grave, than to have the sorrow of his disgraceful conduct for one day. Let chi think of this when they are tempted to do wrong. Let ther to mind the anguish, more bitter than wormwood, which wicked conduct will bring upon their father and mother; by that may they be persuaded to resist temptation and c to the keeping of the commandments of God. Thus the honor their parents, and the blessing of Heaven shall be them. "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

II. This brings us to the second grand division of our disc which is to insist on the duty which this commandment en on children. By insisting on this duty, is meant the presen of reasons or motives why it should be done. 1. The first n which we mention therefore, why children should honor parents is, that by so doing they will obtain the blessi God. He promises them in this commandment, a long life- is a blessing; and in it are included, health, prosperity, co honor, and earthly happiness in all its varied forms. T therefore, a very great and precious promise, and God wi be slack in fulfilling it, in the case of all children who ob commandment! Think of the blessedness which is here inv even in this world! Think how desirable it is to live to a l

and honorable old age! and that, by the direct interposition of God! This is one motive by which children are exhorted to honor their parents.

2. Another motive is, that obedience to this commandment is the only way to secure peace of conscience. Children who dishonor their father and mother, cannot escape from remorse. Wherever they go, conscience goes, and whispers in their ear their guilt. It traverses the ocean, and is heard close upon their heels in the wilderness. In a strange land it accuses them of the injuries they have done to their parents. Nor will it let them alone in sickness. In dreams it terrifies them. When they think of the judgment day, they tremble at the thought of the grief and sorrow which their conduct gave their parents. And if they hear that their father and mother are no more, even these tidings give them no relief, but redouble their distress. "Oh! could we but bring them back from the dead," they will say to themselves; "Could we but enjoy their presence one hour, how earnestly would we implore their forgiveness, and confess the offences by which we dishonored them! But now it is too late! Oh! the intolerable bitterness of having grieved our parents' hearts." If children would avoid the bitterness of such reflections, let them obediently comply with the precept: Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

3. Another motive, in view of which, we would insist on the performance of this duty is, that parents are the nearest and dearest friends of their children on earth. This is a consideration of great weight. Whom will children honor if not their dearest and nearest friends? Whom will they love and obey, if not those who love them with a tenderness which no language can express? Men have doubted and questioned all things, even the existence of the world and the being of a God, but there never lived the child that doubted or called in question the love of its parents. That love is a reality. It ceases not, we believe, no, not with the going out of life itself; but from the eternal world looks back and longs to minister to the welfare of its well-beloved. Woe betide the unhappy, graceless outcast, who grieves the heart of his father or mother, and renders all their love and affection vain. "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." But,

4. The final motive we urge upon children for the obedience of this commandment is, that God requires them to do it. This is the highest and most solemn of all considerations. He that commands angels, and sways the awful sceptre of the universe, and is Lord of lords and King of kings: He, in whom centres all power, and all glory, and all authority; from whom all created beings received their existence, and to whom alone they are all

amenable, the Holy and Eternal Jehovah presents himself before every child with this special command: "Honor thy father and thy mother." What a motive in the very being and attributes of Him by whom the precept is uttered! Alas! youth do not always remember this. They often disregard the inquiry whether this or that action will dishonor their parents, as though it were a matter of but small consequence. They indulge themselves in pleasures, in books, in the company of associates, in forming associations of the most serious nature: they imbibe sentiments, cherish plans, and pursue courses of life at war with every known feeling of their parents' hearts: and this they do when they know it is wrong, and contrary to their parents' oft repeated advice; but how seldom do they consider the greatness of their sin. It is not only an earthly parent's heart that they have wounded; it is not only the law of their father and mother's honor they have violated—it is the Majesty of Heaven and Earth that they have disregarded! it is the law of the Most High God they have broken! it is the honor of their father in Heaven, which they have so grievously offended! In dishonoring a fellow mortal, they have disobeyed God. Think of this, O youth, when temptation besets you. Think how, when you consent to sit with the scoffer, to walk with the wicked in his ways, and to put away from you the commandment to honor your father and mother by conduct such as makes them not ashamed, you not only forfeit a blessing—wound your own conscience—offend against your best earthly friend; but more than all, you sin against God and break his holy and eternal law. Beware then, how you ever give yourself to the disobedience of this commandment. Make a covenant with yourselves, that, by the grace of God, you will at least have the unspeakable satisfaction of knowing, in your own consciences, that you have faithfully endeavored to do this one thing—to honor your father and mother, in the very terms of God's requirement.

In the keeping of this good commandment, you have the special promise of God to cheer you. And when that promise is once fairly realized, you will be happier, more honored and more honorable than the sons and daughters of kings. You will be masters of a wealth, which all the gold and gems of this world can never equal—the wealth of an approving conscience, and of the favor of God. Nor must you ever forget, that as part of this blessing promised, you will enjoy your *parents' blessing*. That is one of the most precious treasures of the soul. There is hardly a sorrow of earth but what it will lighten—not a grief but what it will greatly assuage. It will disperse many of the clouds that gather around that melancholy day when you are for the first time fatherless and motherless. To be sure that you have their blessing, will diminish the bitterness of that hour which consigns them to the dust. It will be to you as a good pledge that you and they will meet in that happy land, where holy spirits forever dwell together, in the pure and blessed service of God.

It is the commandment of God that you should honor your father and mother. See that you do it. Do it with all your heart. Do it because God requires it. Do it on all occasions, and at every sacrifice of personal feelings. Seek grace from God day by day, that you may keep this commandment without fail or fault. Begin every day with the remembrance of it on your hearts. When you retire at night, examine yourselves conscientiously, whether or no you have obeyed it: and wherein you have failed, confess honestly, and pray that you may be forgiven. Take pleasure in honoring your parents: for God is well pleased with all children, who thus obey his will; and your obedience of this precept in regard to your earthly parents will teach you the higher obedience of your father in Heaven. Obedience to God, will become the law of your life. You will love all that is good, and learn to do all that is right. And your life on earth being prolonged to a happy old age, you will then be prepared, through the mercy of God the Saviour, and through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, for the service of God in glory, where your life will never end. Amen, and Amen.

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SERMON DCLXXI.

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GOD, NATURE, MAN, IN THE LIGHT OF CHRISTIANITY.

"In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."—COLOSSIANS ii. 3.

MAN has a twofold constitution, by virtue of which he inhabits at the same time two worlds. His body, gross and perishable, blends him with nature in its ceaseless flow, and makes him brother to the worm which crawls waiting for him in the ground. His soul, ethereal and immortal, lifts him up above nature, opens his life to God, and makes him brother to angels, myriads of whom float unseen waiting for him in the sky. He is thus an heir of Eternity, though a child of Time.

To his physical constitution pertain the familiar and homely uses of life, such as bodily vigor, food, raiment, houses, lands, money, merchandise, and the mechanic arts; which all are of the earth, earthy. Man did not bring them with him into the world, and cannot carry them away. These things, which are seen, are temporal. It is as though the globe itself dissolves, every time a human being dies off of it.

The essential, the permanent, the grand in man, all centres in his spiritual constitution. This constitution, when we come to analyze it, is trinal; corresponding with eternal types and realities. There is that in us, by which we apprehend the Beautiful; and, for want of a better name, we have called it Taste. There is that in us, by which we apprehend the True; and we have called it Intellect. There is also that in us, by which we apprehend the Good; and we have called it the Moral Sense. These

three make up the one man. They are faculties, in us by nature. Only they require development and culture. Then they bloom and bear fruit; enriching our manhood with refinement, intelligence and virtue. Taste, Intellect, Moral Sense: These are the trinal nature. Art, Letters, Religion: These are the triple crown.

So we build, and so we justify the College. It has other foundations, and other walls, than these of brick and stone. It grows up out of the human soul, and is measured and nourished by its wants. The dominant idea of it, is not outward use, but inward culture. Uses indeed it has, manifold and great, ministering, as it must eventually, to all worthy material ends and interests; helping the farmer to better husbandry, the mechanic to better fabrics, the merchant to better traffic, and society at large to better health, better laws, and better manners. But its immediate and chiefest end, is the culture of the man himself. This is end enough, the highest of all ends; even as soul is more than body, and Eternity than Time.

While thus we build and justify the College, we are enabled also to define its work. It must take the whole nature of man, and make the most of it. In deference to our sense of Beauty, it must honor Art. In deference to our hunger for Truth, it must honor Science. In deference to our apprehension of a Divine Presence, it must honor Religion. And neither of these by itself alone, but all in harmony. Exclusive addiction to either one of them breeds mischief. Art, unbalanced, becomes voluptuous; Learning, arrogant; and Religion, fanatical. While in a just blending of the three, there appears the fulness and symmetry of a perfect discipline. Lowest in rank, as most mixed up with material forms, stands Art. Next above it is Science, perpetually gazing and struggling upwards from facts to principles, from phenomena to laws. Highest of all is Religion, as concerning itself supremely with the infinite and the eternal. This is the order of consciousness. It is the order also of history. There is no civilization of ancient or modern times, no culture of Orient or Occident, which has not made faith and worship its chiefest care. Greeks and Romans, Hindoos and Buddhists, Mohammedans, Jews and Christians, have been agreed in this, that Divine rites are the highest of all duties, and the knowledge of Divine things the highest of all wisdom.

Such, in part, are the sentiments which find expression in this edifice,* within whose walls we are now assembled. The completion of it marks an epoch in the history of the College. Compared with our ability, compared with what stood here before, compared with any building of its kind upon the Continent, it is an imposing structure. Massive, substantial, and costly, it bids

* This Discourse was delivered at the Dedication of the New Chapel of Bowdoin College, June 7, 1855.

fair to stand here admired for generations to come, till age has darkened its walls, and deeply furrowed every granite door-sill. And yet most humble and common, when compared with the nobleness of the idea it seeks to realize. In its Gallery of Paintings, it proclaims the legitimacy of Art; in its Library, the worth of Knowledge; in this grave and lofty room, with its glowing windows and its starry roof, it proclaims the dignity of a rapt and reverent Communion with God. These, too, in their proper order; Prayer seeking palpable enforcement, in the very architecture of the building itself, as the central and the grandest thing. Thus we represent the trinal nature of man. Thus we represent its triple discipline. and thus, especially, do we emphasize Religion as at once the crowning grace, and the crowning wisdom, of our culture.

But we do not stand here to-day on the ground of mere Naturalism. There is another and more commanding revelation of God, than the one he has made of himself in the soul of man. It is the Christian Revelation, the record of which is before us in the Scriptures. Commencing with man in Paradise, dimly outlined to the ancient Patriarchs, made more distinct to Judaism, but not rounded out to its completeness, nor clothed with the fulness of its power, till Prophecy was hushed by the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem, and Sacrifice expired in his death upon the Cross.

This Revelation, to which we now turn, has an historic credibility no longer fairly questionable. If we have reason to believe, that Julius Cæsar is the name of a real man, who once led Roman armies into Gaul, and died by the hand of Brutus, in the Senate House, on the Ides of March, then have we equal, if not stronger reasons for believing what is related of Jesus of Nazareth, in the narratives of the Four Evangelists. There is to-day a Christendom, and for eighteen hundred years there has been a Christendom, of which Christ himself, as a real historic personage, is the only rational solution.

And who is Christ? The Son of Mary, certainly; but also the Son of God. Before Abraham was, he is: Angel, Shekinah, Shiloh, Messiah, Logos, all in one. God manifest in the flesh: the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The one only medium, through which the Absolute and Eternal Jehovah has conversed with men. And besides all this, he is also an offering for sin: saluted on earth, and adored in heaven, as the Lamb of God.

What, then, is Christianity? Plainly, a remedial system; presupposing the ruin, and undertaking the recovery, of a fallen race. Like the Spirit of God, which once brooded over the waters, it finds a chaos, and would make a world. And its method is, not by lessons and examples, not by visions and theophanies, which must all be feeble and transient; but by a permanent, historical

incarnation of God in Christ. Or, as the Scriptures have tersely expressed it for us, "God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Such is the Gospel.

It is of this Christ, as revealed and working in this Gospel, rightly called the mystery of God, that the Apostle Paul is speaking in our text. Verbally, the passage is a perplexed one in the manuscripts; the older editors of the New Testament making the relative in the text refer to Christ: "in *whom* are hid;" while Tischendorf, the most recent of the editors, makes it refer to the mystery of the gospel: "in *which* are hid." But these variant readings do not in the least disturb the prevailing sense. In either case, it is the Divine Plan of Redemption, which is set before us, whether we regard the Plan itself, or the Person of its Agent. For all practical purposes, it is allowable to say, that Christ is Christianity, and Christianity is Christ; in whom, and in which, are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. "Knowledge" here is the Greek γνῶσις, which denotes a full and clear perception of what is true in itself and in its relations. "Wisdom" is the Greek Σοφία, which is a word of far profounder meaning, denoting a deep insight into truth, with the further idea of a practical illustration and realization of it.

These are what the old teachers of philosophy promised always to their disciples: the power to discover noble truth; and the power to realize it in a noble conduct. It was this lordly promise which had bewitched the Colossians, as thousands in our day, and in all days, have suffered a similar bewitchment. And with a similar result in all cases. Science, divorced from the great underlying ideas and principles of the Christian scheme, either fully developed or in embryo, no matter what may be its pretensions, is science falsely so called. It cannot go to the bottom of any question. It cannot impart to society either its needed momentum, or its needed guidance. Christianity furnishes the only true knowledge; the only true wisdom. It alone can clear the tangled web of human speculation, solve our mysteries, and give us good assurance of a Millennium.

The departments of our inquiry as students are three: God, Nature, Man. It is proposed, on the present occasion, to look at each of these, for a few moments, from the stand-point of the Christian Revelation.

I. Our Doctrine of God. The idea of the Infinite, if not innate in the sense contested by Locke and his followers, is doubtless potentially present in the human mind. It slumbers there awaiting only its arousing occasion. As the mind itself is stirred and developed, this idea also is developed, as the necessary antithesis of the finite. If there be Time, there must be Eternity. If there be an Atom, there must be a Universe. If there be a Finite Man, there must be an Infinite God. And if these be not intui-

tions, they are at least deductions hardly less rapid and irresistible. Belief in the Divine existence has consequently been universal, or very nearly so, as even the Pagan Sages most stoutly maintained.

And yet the human mind has always reeled under this great thought in its Atlantean vastness and weight. The sense of shrinking and littleness which is thus awakened, is well expressed in the anecdote related of Simonides, who, when asked by Hiero, tyrant of Syracuse, to tell him what God is in his being and attributes, begged a day to consider the question; at the end of which time, he desired two days more; and then four days; each time doubling the number, and giving as a reason for it, that "the more he meditated upon the subject, the more obscure it appeared to him."

It is not merely the intense holiness of God, flashing terror upon a guilty vision; it is not merely those awful scales of justice, whose beam hangs and trembles amongst the stars; there is something unspeakably appaling in the thought of sheer spirit pervading this immeasurable Universe, with a force that nothing can resist, or weaken, striking its steady pulses, age on age, from world to world; and yet a Person, clothed with attributes as distinct and real as our own, with a heart to feel, and a mind to think, and a will to choose. Such is God; the God of reason and of conscience: an Infinite reality, overwhelming our astonished spirits. No wonder, mankind sought refuge early in idolatry. No wonder, the Persian worshipped the rising Sun. No wonder, the Greek peopled sky and earth and sea with a regiment of gods and heroes. No wonder, the Egyptian adored his bounteous Nile. No wonder, the savage Hun said prayers to his naked scimetar. A sin it was, no doubt, and a weakness, and a shame; but most easy to be explained. It was the Adam in them all, fallen and affrighted, seeking an escape from God.

Apart from guilt, there appears to be something in the constitution of the human mind, which will not let it rest quietly in the thought of absolute unity. The Hindoo Theology, for example, begun with Brahm, the Absolute Intelligence, the Essential Light; but presently gave way to Brahma, the Irradiating Light, Creator of worlds and men. Then came Vishnoo, the Preserver. And then again Siva, the Destroyer. While idols without number thronged the Pantheon. Such, at this moment, is the Religion of seventy or eighty millions of our race.

Buddhism, which also had its origin, no doubt, in Hindostan, was a rebellion against this Hindoo Trinity, with its multitude of inferior Divinities. It was a grand attempt to bring back the Oriental mind to its faith in the Unity of God. But the dark abyss of Atheism was soon found yawning at its very feet; and it started back in alarm. Presently, it invented another Trinity. Budha, the Pure Intelligence, takes Dharma, the principle of

Matter, to be partner of his throne. But as the two could not work together without a Mediator, Sanga is added. And then the slope was easy down to Pantheism.

Thus have we touched the two extremes of a bald and sterile Unity on the one side, and a gorgeous Pantheism on the other. And each has its roots within us. It cannot be driven from the mind, that God is One; nor can it be driven from the heart, that we must have him near us in his works, near us in our weakness and our sin. Finite feebleness pleads not merely for an arm of Infinite Power to bear it up; it pleads for a Father's arm. Finite apostasy pleads not merely for a Father's mercy; but pleads also for a Brother's love. Finite waywardness, sobbing over its frequent wanderings, pleads not merely for outward encouragement, but pleads also for an inward comforting and help.

Such are the cravings of our nature. And there is no response to them, but in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Herein do we learn that God is One, but a God of grace, teaching us to call him Father; revealing himself in the redeeming Christ, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and now working, through the Spirit to sanctify our hearts, and regenerate a disordered world.

Here stands our Christian Theology. It gives us, on the one hand, no stern Allah of Mohammed; nor, on the other hand, does it mock us with the Pantheistic mist of a universally diffused Intelligence; but it gives us our God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, and each to all.

II. Our Doctrine of Nature. Here, all around us, is a material Universe apparently entirely antipodal to Spirit. Matter and Spirit seem, indeed, to stand in a sharp antagonism, dividing the Universe between them. What, now, are the relations subsisting between these two? What has God to do with Nature? Or Nature with God? These are questions, as I need not tell you, which have always perplexed the Philosophers. Did Nature beget God, or did God beget Nature? Or, still again, have they co-existed from Eternity in an eternal rivalry? To answer the first of these inquiries in the affirmative, would give us Pantheism. To answer the last in the affirmative, would give us Dualism. While it has been difficult to answer the second in the affirmative, declaring Nature to be of God, without doing some violence to our faith in the Divine Benevolence.

Natural Theology in our day, with its Bridgewater Treatises, is very confident of its ability to reason out the Existence, Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God from the works of Nature. But one of its positions, which it has to take, is a virtual confession of lameness in the argument. It is not in every instance, but only in "a vast plurality of instances," that the Divine Goodness is affirmed to be clearly visible. Some evils are admitted to exist.

What shall be done with them? Paley says, they have only to be voted down. The voices of gladness, it is argued, are against the voices of wailing as a hundred to one. And so we settle the question with a pencil upon our slates.

But ages ago there came this verdict from Lucretian: "I dare affirm that the present economy of things was not divinely ordered, since there is so much of evil in it." And, sweeping as it is, this conclusion of the old philosopher has yet something of reason in it. The evils complained of, are manifest and grievous; and more in number, too, than Paley is quite willing to admit. Three-fourths of the surface of our globe is surrendered to the sterile, devouring sea. Swamps and deserts deform the land. Tempests and lightnings torture and tear the sky. War is the law of the animal kingdom, from the top to the bottom of the scale. Each species lives by preying upon the species next under it. Man also is subject to disease, and suffering, and death. It may be urged that happiness is in the ascendant. No doubt it is. But why so much of misery? Why any misery at all, in a world created and managed by a Being of boundless Benevolence and Power?

It used to be said, that God at first made the world, as he made man perfect; and that the present disordered state of it has been brought about since the Fall, and in consequence of the Fall. But modern science has utterly exploded this clumsy theory. Death was in the world, as declared by Fossil Geology, ages before man made his appearance here. Death, with all its attendant fears and sufferings. And the presumption is a very fair one, that, in every respect, the present economy of things about us in the world, is very nearly what it was in the beginning, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. There has been, accordingly, no Fall of Nature; only a Fall of Man.

As to the disorders observed in Nature, Christianity looks down upon them with entire composure from a lofty height. The solution is simply this, that the world was left imperfect in anticipation of its moral history. It was preconfigured to its career of sin. The Drama required a fitting Theatre. Sin needed its shadows and echoes in an eclipsed and discordant economy.

But sin is not alone here. Redemption is wrestling mightily against it. The world, then, is not a prison, but a school-room; not a grave-yard, but a battle field. We are here for conflict, and for discipline. Christ is at once our Captain, and our Example. Voices from Heaven cheer us on. Angels of God whisper courage and patience. The evils and miseries appointed us, are only spurs and stimulants to virtue.

Such is our Christian Philosophy of Nature. It denies no facts, and glosses none. It admits all the jangling and friction. It bends in meekness and reverence to hear the sighs and the

wailing. And still it clings to Nature as a child of God, contending for us, and contending with us, to accomplish our redemption.

III. Our Doctrine of Man. First of all, the essential character of man has been a sore puzzle to mere Philosophy. Sometimes the ground is taken, that man is altogether such as his Maker would have him to be; guilty of no sins, burdened by no depravity.

But such a position is utterly untenable. The conscience of the race is against it. All human experience is against it. All human legislation is against it.

Sometimes, on the other hand, the ground is taken, that men are not mere men, as they appear to be, but ruined angels, put here on a new probation, to see if, perhaps, one or more in a thousand of them may not somehow be reclaimed.

And so our speculation swings and surges about, while we are seeking to know ourselves. It is only the Gospel that can give us rest. According to this, Sin is indeed acknowledged as a startling, monstrous development, but is not wholly divorced from the righteous and merciful Providence of God. It had some sort of place amongst the eternal Counsels of God. It was permitted, we are taught to say. Without excuse or palliation; wholly chargeable upon man himself; and yet permitted. This much is required by reason; for sin is certainly in the world, and the world is God's world. But this alone, though not to be denied, would only distress and stagger us. Forever should we toss our questions against the Heavens, demanding to know the meaning of this tremendous permission.

Christianity resolves the difficulty by presenting the remedy provided. This also lay in the counsels of God. It was promised as soon as needed; and the whole history of our race has been what Edwards so nobly described it, a History of Redemption. A man now may murmur if he will. But that will only prove him perverse. For Redemption stands over against Sin, as Gerizim against Ebal, meeting the shouted curse with a shouted blessing.

Next arises the great question of human destiny. Out of Christ, the historic problem is a very hard one. It might most plausibly be argued, that human progress is all a fiction; that nations, like individuals, have their youth, their manhood, and their inevitable decay; and that the course of history, from the beginning, has been nothing better than the constant revolving of a wheel. Reasons might also be given for believing, that modern Society, almost everywhere, is in its decadence, and that the end is near.

But looking with an eye of faith upon the present and the past, *we discern* a Divine Form moving about. It is not the nations, *but the Church*, that God has cherished as the apple of his eye.

and slowly rode away. There I stood, and forgot to bring my hammer down. "Greatly concerned for my salvation!" It rung through my ears like a thunder-clap. If he had reasoned with me, I could have confounded him. But here is a new argument. What shall I do? I went and told my pious wife. She urged me to go and see the man. As I entered his little room, I said to him, "My dear Sir, I have come to tell you that I am greatly concerned for my own salvation." "Praised be God," said the aged Christian. "And there we kneeled down together, and yielded our broken spirits up to Christ." Go forth, my brethren, and with the same emotion and prayer and earnestness, present God's truth, by the fire-side and the way-side, and how noble will be your co-operation.

One word, in closing, to my venerable fathers and brethren in the ministry. How stupendous the weight that presses upon us! What can equal it? The glory of God, the destiny of souls, and our own last account. I cannot, my dearly beloved, instruct you, but I can weep with you, over the desolations of the past, and the gloom of the future. I can go down with you to the shore of eternity, and there look out upon the interminable waste. Scowling tempests are gathering there, and dark spirits from the bosom of our people, are going out there. They will wander, and never find rest. They will miserably perish. Our people are to be divided. We stand with them at the last tribunal. "No creature breathes." The voice of God pierces every soul. "Come ye blessed." "Depart ye cursed." And now they are mounting up. Every saved soul shouts for joy. He honors God. He sparkles, as a gem, in the crown of Jesus. But here they are sinking down. The gate of hell grates harshly as they enter. And now the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. And is there one here whose heart is untouched by such scenes? Do you struggle feebly for your people? Beware, my brother, lest you be found wanting in the benevolence of Christ. Christ loved these souls. Christ died for them. And if any man, be he elder, bishop, or pope, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." God does not promise heaven to the faithless preacher. His doom of all others will be most terrific.

"What scene is this, (says Griffin,) that I behold in hell? A lurid shape, more scarred with *thunder* than the rest, around which a crowd of dreadful beings, with furious eyes, and threatening gestures, are venting their raging curses. It is an unfaithful Pastor. Those around him are his wretched people. My soul turns away, and cries, Give me poverty—give me the curses of the wicked—give me the martyr's stake. "But oh! my God, save me from the doom of the unfaithful minister." But are you suitably affected by the guilt and hazard of your people? Does their wail of woe freeze you? Does their burst of joy thrill you? Does

the cross of Christ charm you? Then let us arise—let us in *earnest* begin the work. Let us hang upon God. Let us with the ten thousand ministers and Christians of our land, prove, illustrate and point home the word of God. At the fervor of our prayers, and the earnestness of our persuasions, "let the pillars of heaven tremble, let the mountains of the earth be shaken."

And why should we not thus labor? Toil is nothing in such a cause. Jesus will be honored. Sinners will be saved. Our own souls will be magnified. For they that be wise and turn many to righteousness will shine—will shine, while others are in darkness—will shine in heaven—will shine as the stars. Yea, when the *stars* have gone out, *they* shall shine on and on, forever and ever.

SERMON DCLXXIII.

BY REV. WILLIAM WARREN,

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THE GREAT SIN.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery."—Exodus xx. 14.

Sin has no excuse. And yet there is no form of iniquity but seeks to hide itself under some flimsy pretext or covering. One sin excuses itself on the ground of original propensity; another of temptation. This sin sets up the plea of law, that, of custom or fashion. Now, vice excuses itself on the ground of interest, honor or example, now of appetite, pleasure or passion. One sin says, "Let me alone, for it is a breach of constitutional right to meddle with me." Another says, "Let me alone, for it is interference with the right to eat, drink and sell whatsoever seemeth good." Another says, "Let me alone, the law of nations or honor licenses me." Still another, "Let me alone, for it is a shame to speak of me," and flies behind the vail of false modesty.

But the *day* is coming, smile or blush as you may, when there will be nothing too indecent or indelicate to be made known. Shall we be awe-struck by the cry of indecency, when God commands us to speak; when our very land is death-struck; when our ships pollute the sea and shore; when our great cities are ulcers of crime, and our villages and towns are taking the infection; when the very sanctuary of virtue is invaded and defiled, and our homes and firesides are imperilled? We offer no apology for declaring God's counsel. His word is profitable for correction and reproof. And be it so that a riveted prejudice has generally prevailed against the exposure of this sin of licentiousness, I believe that prejudice has always been greatest where there was most need of such exposure. *False* modesty is always most clamorous where there is least of the

true. Let not the pulpit quail before the threats and prejudices of the age. Let sin, whether bold and unblushing, or lurking and shame-faced, be fearlessly rebuked.

"When satire has at last spent all its force,
To bring temptation and her lures to shame,
The pulpit in the use of its unequalled power,
Must stand acknowledged while the world shall stand,
The most unflinching guard of virtue's cause."

The seventh commandment forbids every form of sensuality in act or thought. It requires the government of the sensual passions. It throws the sanction of Heaven over the purity and chastity of the race. It forbids improper words and looks, indelicate acts, seductive arts, and all indecent modes of dress and exposure. It excludes the use of books, prints, and pictures, that excite the passions and debase the morals. It discountenances those vile exhibitions and disclosures upon the stage or otherwise, that tend to corrupt the imagination and undermine the moral principles.

I need not go into further particulars here. Doth not nature itself teach us? Conscience and scripture are emphatic in their remonstrance against this form of wickedness. The law of God requires purity within and without; where only the eye of heaven beholds, as well as where the eye of man restrains. This law like the sword of the cherubim, turns in every direction to guard the tree of virtue and of life. I now ask candid attention to several reasons or dissuasives against this vice.

I. The most fearful *denunciations of Scripture* are against it. Warning stands upon almost every page. It is in some sense *the* sin denounced in the Bible. "The works of the flesh" that exclude from heaven are made up very much of different forms of *this* sin. "Because of these things," to wit, "fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection and evil concupiscence, the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." The Bible is a fearful book to the guilty. It has no ray of hope nor beam of promise for the wicked. He that is guilty of this sin cannot expect to enter the gate of heaven; when it is declared that, "without are dogs and sorcerers and whoremongers and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie!"

II. *Nature protests* against this sin. Her voice is the voice of God; her laws, the laws of God. The Deity has left the imprint of his plan upon the fair surface, as well as among the deep foundations of nature. There is an aspect of innocence and propriety upon all her works. Lessons of virtue and purity are taught in her laws and beauties. There is morality in every landscape and flowery scene. Everything without suggests propriety, purity and virtue, and rebukes vulgarity and uncleanness.

Especially was *man* made to be pure. Everything in either volume of God's great revelation admonishes him to be virtuous. Nature protests against this great wickedness in the form of prostrate health, and a ruined constitution; of loathsome disease and entailed distress and degradation inherited by innocent offspring. Nature remonstrates, too, in the deep instincts and tastes violated by this sin, and in the loss of refined sensibilities obliterated by vice.

And how highly the sensualist pays for his enjoyments. Short pleasures often plant permanent sorrows. Inordinate indulgences die usually by their own excesses. Forbidden joys, like the powder and the fire, are consumed by their own fierce embrace. And who can bear the burden of a condemning conscience, the tooth of corroding remorse, or the pointed finger of disgrace, detestation and self-loathing? Infamy and fearful forebodings are the price paid for forbidden pleasure.

Pure enjoyment grows on the path-side of noble pursuits. It meets you always in the highway of duty. He that triumphs over temptation is a prince among men. There is far more joy in self-conquest than in yielding to sin. He who gains a victory over himself, sits upon a throne of power and enjoyment. Not the wine sparkling in the glass, nor the voluptuous music and dance, nor the pillow of forbidden pleasure, can compare with the calm consciousness and ennobling transports of one that has followed through perils the path of rectitude and honor.

There is no violation of law against which God has hung out so many beacon-warnings as here. There is no sin that has so many signs exhibited in terror from every window of the soul. If God made one tree more sacred than the rest, and threw around it his strongest interdictions, can we wonder that in the paradise of morals, there should be one trait, one tree, one virtue, more guarded and sacred than the rest.

If he has suffered some one disease to spread, or animal or plant to grow, that is more destructive than all others, may we not believe that some one vice has come to infect the human family, that is more injurious and fatal than every other? This is true in nature, may it not be so in morals? I would not take an iota from the turpitude of other vices, by exaggerating the guilt of this: but I believe this to be the most aggravated form of wickedness that infects the world. Nature unperverted, as interpreter of the divine will, protests and revolts against it. If there was a serpent in the grove where you walk, whose bite or charm was death; or a plant or flower there, the plucking or perfume of which was fatal, how cautiously would you tread that enchanted ground! Or if there was a disease in your vicinity, whose contagion was deadly, or a room in your house, the opening of which would send out the malaria of death upon you, how close would you keep that disease or that room! In cases like these you will keep close to nature. You would heed her admonitions, obey her laws, and learn her lessons.

And will you not heed her voice, when she warns you against a vice whose power to ruin is not confined to the body, nor to time; but reaches and ruins the soul! The evils just named are limited to the physical health, and to the present scene; but sin kills beyond the tomb. Eternity has no balm, no remedy for its plagues or its woes.

And where the warnings of Scripture and nature are all unheeded, God lets the character become a wreck. And can we wonder? If vegetation divorced itself from nature's plan and rules, should we not expect that everything would die? If the divine mechanism of the body vetoed the laws of physical life, should we not expect earth to become a charnel-house of death? And if the heavens should cast off the reins of gravitation, and act independently of God's great power in nature, would not everything fall into confusion? And can the higher laws that regulate social life, and control the spiritual world be violated with less impunity

or less injury? What but horror, here and hereafter, can be inherited where every moral refinement and conservative instinct and sentiment is corrupted, and every impulse and warning and standard of nature and virtue is violated? The end of such a course is destruction.

III. Sensuality *breaks down the moral principles*, and when this is done, the superstructure of character falls, and the ornaments of virtue perish; as we shall see.

The moral principles may be termed the masonry of the mind. They are the strong foundations of an enduring character. Nothing can be substituted for them: nothing beautiful or valuable can long survive them. But they cannot long stand the shock of allowed crime.

Look at some of them. The mind, in a healthy state, is conscious of certain fixed points of belief; but habits of sensuality set the mind all afloat. The mind has an unhesitating adherence to right and truth, to just the extent that natural confidence and conscience bear sway in the soul; but this sin tends to sweep these standards away, and confuse and corrupt the moral perceptions. The mind, too, has an innate sense of accountability, an anticipation of final retribution; but a course of confirmed licentiousness reverses these convictions and produces a state of indifference to the future. A sense of justice, sentiments of humanity, feelings of natural affection and noble aspirations belong to human nature, and hold a high rank among the moral principles; but habits of sensuality are sure to exterminate these conservative impulses, and make shipwreck of every moral sentiment.

Among the obvious effects or signs of this sin are a loss of the moral judgment, the absence of self-control and self-respect, a prevailing skepticism and moral recklessness. Nor is this all. An incapability of domestic contentment follows; a loss of power to fix the affections, a destruction of the natural attachments, the absence of moral discernments, of respect for superiors, for authority, or the throne above. Who being past feeling, have given themselves to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness. A sense of shame and disgust at length passes away from the very sin that at first filled the face with blushes. One who is in the practice of a wickedness does not perceive its guilt. We have to go out of a house to see it, so we have to leave a habit to see its grossness. Nothing can equal the loss of the moral sentiments, nothing can compensate that loss. As a house whose sills and joints are rotted off, so is the character of the confirmed sensualist; it leans towards destruction. It trembles, and the first breath will lay it in the dust.

IV. Sensuality does *violence to the virtues*. The virtues are outposts of the character, mortised into the foundations of principle. They are the outward, the active, the ornamental in the life. But they cannot long survive the wreck of the moral principles, any more than the sails and colors of a ship can float after the deck has gone down. As the tassels crown the corn, or the bow the shower, so the virtues the character.

But licentiousness sends a mildew upon all the field of virtues. As nights of frost strike the glory of the forest, nights of forbidden pleasure put upon the moral verdure the imprints of death. Sincerity fails, honor withers, truth and right are prostrate, friendship, affection, humanity and

patriotism perish, and all the spontaneous instincts and disinterested habits and traits lie in the dust. The Upas shade of licentiousness, how soon it chills the hearts of happy households and fills the sanctuary of home with strong repellances. The law of love and peace and truth, of kindness and contentment and confidence is at an end. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever, but the shame of transgression is pollution and death.

V. *This sin ruins others.* The seventh is the only commandment whose violation necessarily involves others in guilt. But this sin is one of temptation, and seeks companionship in crime. Happy is he who can say, I have corrupted no one, I have defrauded no one. What reflection more cutting than to feel that we have been the cause of another's ruin? Who, on his death-bed, or in eternity, could endure the thought that his pleasures had been enjoyed at the expense of another's wretchedness. Shun, therefore, every art and snare and charm that ruins the soul. Like the stone that falls upon the still lake, every violated law stirs the whole surface of the soul, and fearful billows of ruin will roll up and out forever.

I make no explanation here for referring to a matter, which, perhaps, none of you ever *thought* of connecting with the evils of licentiousness. I allude to the practice of giving up one's will to the magnetism or magic of another. God made man to preserve his own self-possession and personal consciousness, and to maintain always and everywhere a free will, and sense of responsibility. These are things which he cannot alienate or *violate* with impunity. No one has a right to allow himself or herself to be put beyond their own discretion or self-control, or to put another into that state. It is a violation of the law of nature and of God. I cannot away with this practice! It is wrong in principle and wrong in nature; while some, no doubt, are initiated innocently, and come out of these states innocent. No one can dabble with these enchantments and divinations without moral and mental injury. I forewarn you, my friends, that licentiousness is going to reap a heavy harvest from this new philosophy. Such susceptible ones, instead of following those who practice these charms, ought to put themselves at once under the care of a skillful physician, or fly to some insane retreat for safety. Sin has a thousand treacherous arts to practice on the mind.

VI. *This sin leads to every other.* It is the smooth but precipitous way that leads to hell. We have glanced at the destruction it works in the moral nature. Let us now see its effect upon other vices. One sin has a natural affinity for another. The vices, like the birds of passage, go in flocks; or like ravenous beasts, in groups, or gangs. They are weak in each other's absence, but strong in each other's embrace. One prepares the way for another, paves the way for another, removes the obstructions of principle and habit, that lie in the way of the rest. They grow with each other's growth and strengthen with each other's strength. Like seeks like, tempts like, has an affinity, a charm for the same. Emphatically true is this of sensuality, when it becomes the master passion. It is lenient towards every evil, licenses every iniquity, and stimulates every vile habit. A slight allowance here is like the letting forth of waters, the embankments of moral principle, the fortifications of bold virtue, are swept away, or struck down. All soon becomes a wreck.

Can we then safely take to our confidence or companionship a person of doubtful morality? Can we let our little ones play with scorpions and vipers? And is it right to frame apologies, or offer excuses for such as hold up their heads, while their hearts and lives are blank of all moral principle. He who consents to do this, becomes accessory to their crime.

I would not forget the example of Christ here; how he ate and drank with sinners! Everything depends on motive and faithfulness. When we can imitate Christ in these, we may go anywhere, and do anything. I would do no injustice to the falsely accused, nor abandon those whom the deep waters of repentance have cleansed. No, let the worthy and well-intentioned be welcomed to our sympathy; and let us cast none away who will "go and sin no more." But the loose and lewd, let them be shunned as vipers, save as you go to them as you would go to the lepers, to cleanse them. The safety of society demands a high standard of social intercourse. Say not the verdict against fallen woman is too severe. Say, rather, that against fallen man is too light. Woman has finer sensibilities, and a quicker perception of the pure and the virtuous than man, and a prompter repugnance to temptation and insult. And when she has broken over all these, she falls lower than man even. Her safety in part, lies in they known fact that one false step blasts her fame. Take not from her, then, a single element of safety, or a single incentive to virtue! Let man be treated thus, and he would be under a new motive to honor and virtue. The pressure of public opprobrium would act as a safe-guard to his principles. I say, let public sentiment be decisive against both the seducer and the seduced, the profligate and the abandoned of either sex. But to return from this digression.

I will now proceed to remark, once more, that *this sin frustrates the great end of human life.* It corrupts the body; perverts the habits; enfeebles the mind; unhinges the conscience; and renders the great objects of life insipid and tasteless. Who can undertake anything valuable, or patiently pursue any noble end, without moral principle? His self-respect lost; self-command lost; the helm of his desires and purposes gone; the power to concentrate his thoughts and control his will gone; what grand purpose or noble enterprise can such a wreck of character and principle accomplish? One who has lost his own respect and confidence, and the respect and confidence of others; who has no power to endure hardships or brave obstacles; how can he accomplish anything valuable in life? Who can do anything praiseworthy for man or the world, that has become fickle and effeminate, and enamored of voluptuous and fugitive enjoyments? He who is lost to every worthy sentiment, and dead to every noble impulse and motive; who feels the helm of no governing purpose, nor breath of any exalted principle, but lives only to eat and drink and indulge himself, how can he but fail of the great ends of human life? Surely, there is no post of honor or responsibility, or circle in life, for which this vice does not disqualify man. I have spoken of the effect of licentiousness in this world, but I have to add that a fearful future is before the wicked in the world to come. There is no habit that so benumbs the conscience, fetters the purposes, and destroys the recuperative energies of the soul as this. It makes the moral nature like the tinder, in which the sparks of temptation catch, and the fires of Eternity kindle and consume. Not even the drunkard, with his delirium-tremens, with a world of evil

spirits and foul demons around him, has so keen a sense of approaching blame as the finished sensualist. Arrows, flaming and ministering flame, pierce through and through his soul, while yet it lurks in time, and clings to earth. These are terrible admonitions of the future. O, it is Virtue's ways that are ways of peace. Take them, follow them, if you would not die. Ten thousand times, I tell you to take them, keep them, follow them, if you would escape the lake that burneth. Think not that there is a loss in this. No! the gain is a thousand-fold *here!* But, even if there *were loss* in self-restraint and self-conquest, who would not be willing to *plant* his joys here, in order to harvest them forever.

With one or two words, I close. *Beware of beginnings!* The time to stop in crime is before commencement. Young friends, your safety lies in never taking the first step. *Give it no allowance in your meditations or imaginations!* Scorn to let your immortal minds be stained by such pernicious employment. *Be sensitive and watchful against the first and least temptation!* Put from you all books and pictures that have a licentious bearing. Fly from everything that endangers virtue or defiles the heart. *Avoid bad associates!* Distrust them who prefer the night to the day; the lower to the higher pleasures; the dance and the frolic, to the higher duties and aspirations of life. *Avoid every incentive to vice*, in dress, in fashion, in airs and exposures, and in bewitching, beguiling charms! Do not form hasty acquaintances, nor fall a prey to flighty or flashy affections. Keep your heart: keep your judgment; hold your self-possession; set high by your hand; higher by your virtues; but highest by your hearts. *Attend to the words of wisdom!* How much are such words worth! Oh, how many have said, *too late.* How have I hated instruction and despised reproof. Worlds would I give for the innocence I have lost, and the chance I once had to be saved. *There is but one course of safety;* it is to give your hearts to Christ. Enter wisdom's ways. Come under the attractions of the cross. Then temptation will lose its charm, and your tastes and attachments will be pure. And when the hand of icy death feels for your heart-strings, and closes forever life's warm currents, you will be safe—you are blest!

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SERMON DCLXXIV.

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GOD'S WONDROUS DEALINGS.*

"Be glad ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain: and the floor shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil. And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you."—JOEL ii. 23, 24, 26.

WONDROUSLY; as the harvest testifies. Wondrously; as peace, prosperity, and plenty testify. Wondrously; as our individual comforts, the lengthening of our days and the continuance of our hopes of heaven bear witness. The floors are full of wheat, and the fats overflow with wine and oil. We eat in plenty and are satisfied. We praise the name of the Lord who hath dealt so wondrously with us.

The ingathering from our harvest fields demands thanksgiving. Our civil authorities offer a tribute of gratitude to Him from whose Divine Providence their rights proceed, and by whom their enjoyment of them has been peacefully continued and confirmed. Our church unites her voice in the general offering of praise, remembering that the powers that be are ordained of God, and, in obedience to them, providing, by solemn hymns, and common prayers, for the irrepressible thanksgiving of her children. The general conscience of our people speaks a similar language,

* Preached, New York, November 29th. 1855.

and the general heart throbs with a common generous impulse of gratitude to God. In harmony with such a spirit, we meet to place our common sacrifice on the altar which we love. Let us come with such humble and fervent hearts as will call down, from the Lord our God, a reviving influence of his Spirit, to kindle our gratitude to praise; and mingle the incense from our temple with that mighty cloud which is gathering strength, and rolling upward from many thousand sanctuaries of our land, acceptably, toward the throne of our Father reconciled.

What theme should we indulge, but the wondrous dealings of God. His promise has not failed. Each season seems to re-erect Noah's altar in our midst, and to repeat to every generation the story of God's unfailing and unalterable word. Summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, still run their joyful round of obedience to the Creator's will, scattering generous delights with a full hand. God's Mercy went out with the sower as he laid down the precious seed. God's Mercy went out with the hoar frost, as he scattered his protecting snow-flakes over the tender plant. God's Mercy went out with the summer sun, as he came back from the south and looked upon our smiling fields on the side of the north. God's Mercy drew clouds between, when the sun grew hot, and the growing grain languished. God's Mercy burst the clouds and sent down gracious rain from heaven, when the ripening grain had exhausted the nourishment from the thirsty soil. And so, God's Mercy having watched, protected and matured the seed, went out with the husbandmen and the reapers as they gathered in the sheaves. "The floors are full of wheat, and the fats overflow with wine and oil." It is sufficient to say that the harvest has equalled the hopes of the sower. We have not only sufficient for our own necessities, but abundance to pour out for the wants of sufferers in less favored portions of our world. And now while the reaper puts aside the sickle, and he that bindeth up the sheaves rests from his toil, there is a call upon us from the field and the barn floor, from the fireside which well-rewarded labor has made cheerful, and from the households which a plenteous harvest has placed above want, that we should unite in their song of gratitude to God's mercy. We would not refuse to rejoice with them that rejoice, even if we were not partakers of their good things. But since we share with them; and whilst every season, every month, every moment of the circling year pours God's mercies into our own cup, fills our own bosom with the golden sheaves of God's benefits, we must have Thansgiving for ourselves.

God's mercy has gone forth with our industry and enterprise under all its forms. Manufacturers have met a generous demand and been able to return a liberel supply. Commercial exchange has favored many a people with our superabundance, and received a full return of comfort and luxury, both to profit itself,

and give joy to all who depend upon its energies. In a time of great commercial pressure, the forecast and frugality of our merchants, through God's blessing, has saved them from any general disaster. During a year of unexampled danger to the course of trade, our exchanges have been made with little disorder; amidst rumors of financial difficulty we have experienced little distress: property maintains its value, labor brings its remuneration, and wealth scatters its favors with a liberal hand. The professions and liberal arts, the efforts of science, talents, and mental industry, have all been accompanied in their sphere by God's mercy. They have received their reward, whether it were applause of men, pecuniary gain, the increase of human happiness, or the praise of God.

During the course of the year we have welcomed with great satisfaction the return of our Arctic voyagers. We may well say that their absence has been a source of national anxiety. Interested as was every heart in the search which called them forth to brave the rigors of the pole, following them as representatives of our national solicitude for the lost wanderers amidst those ice wildernesses, we could not but fear that an indomitable enterprise would carry them also beyond all reach of succor, and that every expedition sent to their relief would but add to the monuments which eternal winter heaps over our Anglo-Saxon dead in the graveyard of the north. It was a God's Mercy that brought those brave companions home again in safety. It was a God's Mercy which brought day again to their long winter's night; which delivered them from a cold captivity, where many valiant hearts sleep with no hope of rescue until the ice lands of the pole give up their dead. We number it among the mercies for which we return thanks to God to day.

Nor can we omit from our general enumeration that good gift of largeness of heart, with which God has again blessed our favored community. We shall not soon forget the sorrows of our brethren in the south who were shut up to disease and distress, whilst health and plenty walked with free step in our midst. In those cities shrunken Pestilence, cursing the morsels of food and the drops of water, and the very air it breathed in common with an afflicted people, tottered from house to house distributing the plague, and left no house until it had commissioned the dead (whom there was no man to bury) to carry on its ministry of woe. As the sick died by hundreds, as the nurses and the physicians and the clergy perished at their posts—as the cries of the orphans filled our ears, what a mercy to ourselves it was, that our hearts did not shut themselves up in selfish rejoicing for our own safety. What a mercy to ourselves that no lines of quarantine kept out the tidings of distress, or kept in the efforts of benevolence; that no arguments of indifferentism and economy prevented our going forth with sympathy, and effectual relief to the

suffering members of the one household. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name be the praise," for a soul to feel a brother's woe, a hand to minister to his relief, and an abundance which we could bestow upon his necessities. There is a view of this act of benevolence in which it becomes a national blessing, and deserves to be recorded and remembered. For it happened at a time when unhappy political questions were arising, which, if they were to be discussed with any other feelings than those which guide and guard the good tempered differences among brethren, threatened to rend our union. At such a moment, our sympathies being called into active exercise, the fact of our brotherhood, and the influences of fraternal kindness were felt on both sides. It has chastened, and we trust will continue to soften the asperity of the conflict of opinion. It is only needed that the charities of the gospel shall control our expressions, and our maintenance of conscientious differences. Then the national family shall know neither north nor south in their mutual concessions for the peace and welfare of the whole. And then shall we transmit to our children, unimpaired, that God's mercy of union and liberty which we have inherited from our forefathers.

God's mercies! how they multiply as we study them. Good gifts, wondrous dealings of his kind providence with us unworthy sinners, bestowing social and domestic comfort and peace; the privileges of family communion and reciprocal deeds of love; contentment and competency, if not abundance and wealth; remnants of prosperity out of adversity; recovered prosperity after adversity; perhaps, prosperity without adversity; health out of sickness, it may be health without sickness; life prolonged, it is possible while we may have been daily walking amidst the tombs; life preserved, though dangers and accidents have many a time threatened; life permitted, perhaps, without an accident, perhaps unshaded even by a fear—as strong and ardent and buoyant and joyous and promising, as when we started on the race, ten, thirty, fifty—shall I say, seventy years ago? Nor is this the sum of God's wondrous dealings of mercy. There is something more than the blessings of the land whose bread is without scarceness, where honest industry never wants, whose stones are iron, whose hills are brass, whose streams are ever living, whose heavens drop down dew, and whose soil is generous as it is rich. There is something more than the blessing of civil liberty, and security of person and substance. There is something more than individual blessings of comfort, and peace and prosperity, and health, and happiness. Neither the earth, the sun, the heavens, nor time itself can tell this story, or measure this blessedness. God's heart sends it forth. God's eternity its sphere. God's only Son its subject. God's well beloved creatures its only object—creatures of whom it is said "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever be-

lieved in Him should not perish, but should have everlasting life." This precious Gospel of our salvation has been yours every day and every hour of every changing season. Its proclamation has followed you in every path. Amidst joy and sorrow, pleasure and grief, prosperity and reverses, it has been continually near; chastening and correcting, or comforting and sustaining; calling your thoughts away from the vanities and insufficient happiness of passing time, and directing them to sources of bliss which are everlasting as God's throne. Nothing has been permitted to interrupt the deep on-flowing of this river of the water of life. Passing by every man's door, each one of us has been privileged to drink and be satisfied. If any of you have not yet tasted this heavenly stream, it is not because God's mercy in redemption has been withheld. The cause lies nearer to the heart itself; which the goodness of God has not yet been able to lead to repentance.

Now these varied and constant mercies are wondrous dealings of God with us, when we consider that during this whole year, nations as deserving as ourselves have been suffering accumulated disasters and misfortunes. As we have read the history of the present European struggle, watched its vicissitudes, been horrified with its details of cruelty and carnage, marked the continual procession of victims marching down to the dead with all the pomp and glory of war, not by thousands only but by hundreds of thousands, and all this in the nineteenth century in the era of enlightened civilization and extended Christianity; when we have felt for the distress which has overspread four of the most populous nations of Europe, entering every house, filling every eye with tears and every heart with mourning, ingathering for its harvest (richer than all the harvests of its fields,) sorrowing widowhood and helpless orphanage, where, if Thanksgiving Day come, its theme must be the praises of battle; whose Te Deum, if it rise at all, must glorify the Prince of Peace amidst hecatombs of slaughtered men—as we have pondered these things, what soul has been so cold, that it had not a thank-offering for God's distinguishing mercy toward our country and ourselves. It is not our statesmanship that has saved us. Those nations boasted in statesmen, who if they had been as fortunate as they were wise, would now have been standing on a pinnacle of fame. It is not a regard to our interests which has saved us. No nations had greater interests at stake than those who have risked, if not sacrificed, them all in this struggle. It is not our distance from the scene of strife which has saved us. We are as near to the combatants as is the seat of war to the chief actors in it. No solution of our safety can be given, except the distinguishing mercy of God; and at any moment that our self-confidence, or vain sense of independence of Him, shall provoke His displeasure, we shall be taught, by how brittle threads of amity

ing propitiatory sacrifices; the golden, for offering eucharistic incense, or pleasant perfumes,—the "sweet incense" of prayer and praise.

As for the brazen altar, it has done its work, entirely; performed its office, completely. At the moment when the bleeding Victim of Calvary uttered the words, "It is finished," all propitiatory offerings, or atoning sacrifices, of every kind, came to a perpetual end. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins;" for Christ "hath appeared, in the end of the world, to put away sin, by the sacrifice of Himself." "Not by the blood of goats and calves, which could not take away sin, but by His own blood, He hath entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." That altar has gone into disuse; that temple itself is in ruins; its vail is rent, from the top to the bottom; its holy place is thrown open to the people; all its splendours have vanished: its whole imposing economy is abolished; and the very nation, whose proud boast was, "The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, are these," is scattered to the four winds of heaven.

But the golden altar, the altar of sweet incense, the altar of prayer and praise, still remains, and is to remain for ever; to overspread the earth yet with its fragrant perfumes, and to fill the heavens with its sweet odours when the earth shall have passed away. "In every place, from the rising of the sun even unto the going down thereof, incense shall be offered unto his name, and a pure offering; for His name shall be great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts." And then, when time shall be no more, the whole scene of delightful devotion is to be transferred to the glorious altar of gold in heaven, of which the most resplendent of the earthly, serves only as "an example and a shadow." "An Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it, with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." "And the four living creatures, and the four-and-twenty elders, fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to receive glory, and honor, and power, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests. And I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

"By Him, therefore, let *us* offer the sacrifice of praise to God." And by Him, my friends, it *must* be offered, if it be expected to reach the skies, or to rise higher than the offerer's lips; for there is no other medium of communication between heaven and earth, either ascending or descending. "There is but one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus;" and it is a fixed and unalterable ordinance of heaven, that through Him every blessing shall descend from God to men, and every breath of prayer or praise ascend from men to God. "No man cometh unto the Father," said he, "but by me." "I am the Door—he that entereth not by the Door, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." As well might the Jewish people have rushed by the appointed high priest with their offerings, and been struck dead in the most holy place, as for any of us to attempt to present even an offering of thanksgiving to God, except through our great High Priest, as the Days-man betwixt God and us, who lays his hand upon both. Aside from Christ, "our God is a consuming fire;" and were we to present our offerings in any other way than through Him,—fire might indeed come down from heaven, but it would be to consume, not the offering but the offerer. We can perform, acceptably to God, no act of worship whatever, neither pray for any blessing desired, nor give thanks for any blessing received, without recognizing Jesus Christ, our Surety, as the medium of it. "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed," is the divine injunction, "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." "Giving thanks always, for all things, unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God," with "our lips," as well as in our hearts; by Him, as our one Mediator; through Him, as our great High Priest; upon Him, as our Golden Altar; that our thank-offerings may be acceptable to God. For it is not the offering that is acceptable, in itself, but the Altar that renders it acceptable—as Christ himself assures us, "Ye fools, and blind! for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar, that sanctifieth the gift?"

Offered upon this Altar, and by this High Priest, no offering, my friends, however small or unworthy, will be unacceptable to God, we may be assured. For even under the typical dispensation, the guilty but grateful worshipper, who, by his priest, presented either, the bleeding victim of the brazen altar, in token of his sense of guilt, or the sweet incense of the golden altar, as an expression of his gratitude for pardon—even he, had entire confidence that the God of Abraham would graciously and gladly accept it: and, surely, we may be quite as confident, that, under the anti-typical dispensation, any expression of gratitude, however low the whisper, any song of praise, however feeble the strain, will reach the ear of our Father in heaven, if offered in the name

And there is another thing to be considered. For all the temporal blessings named, and for more than could be named in a volume, we are indebted, not only to the purchase of Christ's blood, but also to the watchful, active, unintermitted agency of his Providence. And if there were no other motive, or consideration, to prompt us to praise and thanksgiving, ought not this to do it? "Every being, we admit, deserves our gratitude in proportion to the time, and thought, and pains, which he bestows upon our interests, or employs for our good." What, then, on this ground, are our obligations of gratitude to the Lord Jesus, as the God of Providence? What are they not? How constant his care over us! Never does he leave us, for one moment. Let us be at home or abroad, on the land or on the water, in the light or in the dark, awake or asleep, He is always by our side; ever watching us with his eye, ever upholding us with his hand, ever protecting us with his shield. "Thou compassest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways." "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me!" "How precious are thy thoughts unto me!—how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand. When I awake, I am still with thee." Not the tenderest and most vigilant mother is half so watchful over the little infant of her bosom, or attentive to its wants, as He over each one of us, personally, and careful to see our every want supplied. If his providence extends to every little bird of the air, and sustains its flight or guides its fall, think you that a rational and immortal being, like yourself, walks and sits, and wakes and sleeps, and eats and drinks, and lives and dies, without his attention? Nay, far from it. Not only does he compass your path, and direct your steps, and protect your life, and preserve your health, and supply all your wants, but, how strange the words! he even numbers the very hairs of your head. What! Is this, indeed, true? Does He, in reality, my hearers, watch over you, and your interests, with such close attention, with such extreme particularity, as this? Is it a fact, that his attention to you extends, and descends, to the minuteness of numbering the hairs of your head? Does He, in deed and in truth, take such care of you, as to follow with his eye every single hair of yours that falls to the ground? Once admit this, and what follows? That is, once admit that He, for whom you profess so high a degree of veneration, does not try to deceive you with this assurance, and what must be your conclusion as to his care over your higher and more important interests? "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered," says the Lord Jesus, with his own lips. But does he number every hair of your head, and give no attention to the condition of your brain, or the pulsation of your heart, or the heaving of your lungs? Does he number every hair of your head, and not attend to the faculties of your mind, or the functions of your body, or the movements of your limbs? Does he number every hair of your head, and pay no attention to the necessity of

your being, the cravings of your appetite, or the longings of your spirit? Does he number every hair of your head, and has he no hand in giving you sunshine, and showers, and fertile lands, and fruitful seasons, and crowded garners; filling your mouth with food, and your heart with gladness?

You do entertain, of course, a high regard for His character; and would not, for the world, impute to Him falsehood or insincerity in anything He affirms. But I have an enquiry to make of you. How happens it, when He so emphatically assures you that he numbers the very hairs of your head, and of course protects your life, preserves your health, and carefully provides, Himself, for all your wants, that you talk of your fortune, your good luck in escaping dangers, avoiding diseases, raising crops, and making property; and neglect, perhaps, to recognize his hand in the bounties of your table? This is a problem not a little perplexing; and it would be gratifying and edifying to have it solved.

Even our non-professing friends have a great veneration, they tell us, of Jesus Christ, and the pure and perfect integrity of his character; and, if charged with disputing the truth of this plain declaration of his, they would indignantly resent it as a cruel slander. But how does it happen, that, while they hold it to be a veritable fact, that he watches thus carefully and constantly, over all their interests, even to the numbering of the very hairs of their head, they not only withhold from Him any verbal expression of gratitude, for the kindness of furnishing their table with food, but, whenever they speak of it, thank themselves for it, their own industry and management, without the slightest recognition of his agency in it; and sometimes smile at the superstition of those who are simple enough to acknowledge his hand; nay, not unfrequently sneer at the act of giving him thanks for the gifts of His providence!

How is it, too, that, with the most profound veneration of Jesus Christ, some of them use His adorable name as a convenient by-word; and never happen to utter it with either seriousness or respect, but only to round a period, or point a jest; and that others use it as the handiest missile to hurl at the heads of their refractory horses, or as the most suitable interjection for spicing the obscene and profane ribaldry of the bar-room? But still they are very sincere, they do assure us, in their respect and reverence for the character of Jesus Christ. If all the professing Christians in the land are hypocrites, they are not!

Alas, for poor degraded, deluded human nature! To what a state of blind infatuation, and strange absurdity, as well as moral debasement, have mankind reduced themselves by their apostacy from God!

> Endowed with reason—duped by foolery!
> "Erect in posture—prone in appetite!
> Patrons of pleasure—posting into pain!
> Lovers of argument—averse to sense!
> Boasters of liberty—fast bound in chains!"

Be not deceived, my friends; God is not mocked. By a pretension of reverence for His character, or of respect for His truths, while you treat His name as you do that of your dog, you will not impose upon Him, if you do upon yourselves. Nor can any of His professed people "mock" Him, by affecting to believe in His particular providence, while they ascribe their success or their safety, to good luck, or to their own foresight or management; or even while they neglect positively to acknowledge His presence and His power. "A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps." "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." Nothing short of an actual and explicit recognition of this truth, is either showing reverence for Him, or believing what He affirms. And, either to profane His name, or to trifle with His majesty, or to ignore His providence, or even to omit an express acknowledgement of His presence and agency, is not merely to disbelieve His word; it is virtually to deny His existence; it is to be practical atheists.

And, my friends, say what you will, apologize as you may, veil the fact as you please, it will one day appear, that this is the real, unveiled character of the great majority of men, even in this nominally Christian land; they live "without God in the world." How many farmers, for instance, in our country, when they are sowing and tilling their lands, speak or think as much of the necessity of God's agency, in the production of good crops, as of the importance of their own skill and labour? To which do they chiefly look, for the rain and sunshine necessary to render the soil productive, the unchangeableness of God in the Bible, or the changes of the moon in the Almanac? How much of reality do they give to that truth of inspiration, "Neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth; but God, that giveth the increase?" When they are gathering in their heavy crops, which do you hear them talking the most about,—God's kindly interposition, or their own thorough cultivation? And when those abundant fruits of the field come to be spread upon their table, which do they seem to regard as the most worthy of praise, God's careful providence, or their own careful prudence? How many of them are found to give grateful and verbal thanks to His name, as they partake of His bounty? or even to think of him, as having done anything toward furnishing their table, for which their thanks are due.

Now, my friends, what will account for this common oversight of God's hand, the general neglect of men to give praise to His name, but the natural atheism of the human heart? It is not because the multitude are thankless in all cases, and never express gratitude to any benefactor; not because they are incapable of appreciating favours, and rendering praise where they think it to be due. Of heroes, and statesmen, and authors, and artists, they are lavish of their praises. In honour of them, public eulogies are

pronounced, mighty volumes are written, joyous festivals are given and splendid crowns are wreathed. And yet, all the blessings conferred upon mankind, by all the men of prowess, and patriotism, and genius, who have lived since the world began, sink into utter insignificance and nothingness, compared with those which God bestows upon any one individual of the human family, every day that he lives.

And then the minds of those great men, all of them together, compared with the Divine Mind, are as the merest spark struck out from the glorious orb of day. Nay, they are not even scintillations from the mind of God, but mere faint and flittering meteors, kindled up, in this low and murky morass of his empire, by the brightness of his glory. What was the wisdom of Washington, or the intelligence of Newton, or the eloquence of Cicero, or the genius of Raphael, but a little taper glimmering here and there, in this benighted world,—lit up for a moment by the beaming effulgence of His Mind, and then blown out with the slightest breath of his mouth? But what do we see? Look!—the great multitude of mankind running and shouting praises for the light of the dim and delusive meteor, all unconscious, apparently, of the clear splendor of God's great luminary in the heavens, certainly not offering any thanks for it!

Intelligence—genius—skill—these are what you admire. But you cannot be ignorant, that in admiring human specimens of these, you are throwing away your praises upon poor, soiled, spiritless, miserable copies, to the neglect of the all-perfect and adorable originals. You cannot be unaware, that you are going into ecstasies over the pitiful *finite*, and blinking and slighting the glorious *Infinite?* There are sculptors who can, indeed, by a labor of years, carve out, from solid marble, a beautiful piece of statuary; such as you would, perhaps, in your admiration of human genius, go to New York, or even to Italy, to see: but I can show you whole groups in this very village, the work of the Great Artist, in animated marble, "fearfully and wonderfully made," that can walk, and speak, and see, and hear, and reason, and love their Maker too, and enjoy an ineffable and eternal fellowship with him. While men lavish their praises upon Canova, for his skill in producing a poor inanimate model of the human frame, why, if they are not, indeed, practical atheists, have they not some little note of praise for that skill which formed Canova himself, and which gave to him, and kept alive in him, every spark of genius that he possessed?

And then what, really are all of man's boasted discoveries, in science and art, for which the world lauds him so loudly, compared with the wonders of divine wisdom which lie hidden from his view? Age after age rolled away, before he found out what the mighty turtle stood on, that held up the world; and other ages, before he could offer any plausible conjecture about that law by which

his own body adhered to the ground, instead of rising into the air, and all that he really knows about it, to this day, is the bare fact, that he tends toward the earth instead of the moon.

Fire and water have always been household things with mankind, and have ever been the same; but, familiar and simple as they are, no human being has yet ascertained their essence, or many of their qualities; and it took nearly six thousand years for the human mind to perceive that boiling water would lift up the cover of a tea-kettle or explode the kettle itself.

Proud man has discovered, in these last ages of the world, by accident, as he makes all his discoveries, that he can stretch a wire across the continent, and communicate very quickly between the two extremes; and thereupon, what a mighty shout of praise from men to man! But would it not be much more to his praise, if he were to set to work and create the mysterious agent which conveys his message?—or, at least, throw some little light upon our most profound ignorance of the nature of it?

What is the accidental discovery of some invariable and simple law, by which electricity, or air, or light, or heat, is governed, in comparison with that mighty Agency which creates the elements themselves, and looks into their deepest secrets, and controls all their minutest as well as their mightest operations? Why, then, are such applauses bestowed upon the mere discoverer, with scarcely a recognition by the multitude, of the great Author and Disposer? Why are men in general, I may say, so backward to acknowledge the hand or agency of God, while quick and loud in awarding praise to themselves and their fellows, unless they repudiate, or at least overlook, a particular divine Providence, and live "without God in the world?"

If there be any such persons present; any who notice more of kind fortune than of kind Providence, in the blessings they enjoy; any who rely more upon their own industry and prudence, than upon the presence and power of God, for success in their business; any who take more encouragement from the predictions of the almanac than from the promises of the Bible, respecting their crops; they have missed their way,—they have come to the wrong place. We are assembled here, not to congratulate ourselves upon our good fortune, but to acknowledge the guidance and protection of a Divine Hand: not to take credit to ourselves for forecast, and tact, and diligence, but to give thanks for the direction and blessing of Heaven: not to flatter and inflate your proud and atheistical man, but to give praise to our good, gracious, glorious God.

And let us praise HIM. Let us all praise Him, with all the powers he has given us. Let those who have been wont, hitherto, to praise themselves, or their fellow-men, more than God, their mighty Maker their potent Preserver, their beneficent Benefactor, their self-sacrificing Saviour, break forth at length, in praises to HIM.

Do you ask, "Praise Him for what?" I say, Praise him for *every* thing. Praise him for life and for health; and I would say, if you were able to bear it, praise him for sickness too, and for death; for these, as well as the others, are included in the endless catalogue of blessings which he gives us, as the purchase of the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord. "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God, continually," for everything. "Continually," not this day only, but through all time, and all eternity. Let all the people praise Him, always, for all things. Praise Him for our public health; praise Him for our national peace; praise Him for our free government; praise Him for our liberty of worship; praise Him for our rich harvests, for our full store-houses, our commodious dwellings, our luxurious tables. Praise Him for the facilities of education, for the felicities of the domestic circle, for the pleasures of friendship and social intercourse. Praise Him, in short, for the very maximum of civil, social, and religious privilege.

Yes, praise Him, my friends, for all the gifts of his providence, every one, if you can count up the countless number; and when you have put them all together, and then multiplied them by themselves, praise Him a thousand-fold more, for his ONE "UNSPEAKABLE GIFT." Praise Him a thousand-fold more, for the gift of his SON; and, in him, pardon, justification, sanctification, eternal life!

"And what is this? Survey the wondrous theme;
And, at each step, let higher wonder rise.
Pardon for infinite offence!—and pardon
Through means that speak its value infinite,
A pardon bought with blood, with blood divine,
With blood divine of Him I made my foe;—
Persisted to provoke. Though woo'd and awed,
Bless'd, and chastised, a flagrant rebel still!
A rebel 'midst the thunders of his throne!
Nor I, alone; a rebel universe:
My species up in arms—not one exempt.
Yet, for the foulest of the foul HE DIES!—
Most joy'd, for the redeemed from deepest guilt:
As if our race were held in highest rank;
And Godhead dearer, as more kind to man.
Bound, every heart!—and every bosom, burn!
Oh, what a scale of miracles is here!
Its lowest round high planted on the skies—
Its towering summit lost beyond the thought
Of man or angel! *Oh that I could climb*
The wonderful ascent with equal praise;
PRAISE, flow for ever, if astonishment
Will give thee leave—my praise for ever flow.
Praise ardent, cordial, constant; to high Heaven
More fragrant than Arabia sacrificed,
And all her spicy mountains in a flame."

SERMON DCLXXVI.

BY REV. HOLLIS READ,
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THE RELIGION OF COMMON LIFE.

"Ye shall know them by their fruits."—MATT. vii. 16.

THE passage furnishes a criterion by which to judge of men's hearts. Though endowed at present with no organs of sense, or mental faculties by which to enter the secret chambers of the soul and know what is passing there, yet there come out thence trusty messengers bearing unerring testimony to what is within. Would you know what is in man you must see what proceedeth from him. A sweet fountain does not send out bitter waters, nor a good tree bear corrupt fruit. The deliberate, habitual actions of a man are the index of his heart.

The principle itself being readily admitted, we need be at no pains to establish it; yet there are applications of it not so familiar, either as matter of precept or of practice. To some of these we now ask attention. We shall at present leave out of the account the evidence so justly derived from what are commonly denominated "good works," as works of mercy and benevolence; efforts to reform men, the duty of prayer, reading the word of God and meditation, and a serious and profiting attention to Christian ordinances—all of which are direct and essential—and shall confine ourselves to an evidence derived from what I may term, THE RELIGION OF COMMON LIFE, or an exemplification of our religion as seen along the common walks of life—amidst the every-day scenes of life's business, enjoyments and sorrows.

It is a fact too much overlooked that the great body of Christians are found wending their way Zionward in the retired walks of life. So far strangers are they to talents, influence or wealth, that our exhortations to use these to the honor of God and the good of men, seem to a great extent misplaced; not, however, to the exonerating of the Christian of "one talent"—of limited means and opportunities—from as careful and honest a consecration of what he has, as if he had ten. But we must not expect him to employ capabilities and opportunities which he does not possess. Whether or not to be lamented, the great majority of Christians, no doubt are from necessity, incessantly employed in procuring the means of subsistence. Food, apparel, the comforts and conveniences of life, made necessary by habit, the customs of society or our real wants, together with the cares, disappointments and afflictions of life, are the objects which almost wholly monopolize their thoughts and labours. And not only as a matter of fact is it so, but in the present state of things it must to a great extent remain so.

How, then, are such to exemplify the principles of their religion? Certainly not by munificent donations. Nor can they, in the common

acceptation of the term, be "full of good works." Yet they are by no means exempt from the broad injunction, "let your light shine before men." Because from the stern necessity of circumstances they have little or no time to devote to works of mercy, or nature has been parsimonious of talents by which to exert any considerable influence over other minds, or of wealth, to alleviate human woe and make the face of sorrow smile, have they no way left by which to develope their graces and exemplify their religious principles? May they not be the salt of the earth and the light of the world as well as others! Most certainly they may. They are in nowise wanting in opportunities to show what spirit they are of.

Genuine piety is thus described: it is first *pure*; then *peaceable: gentle and easy to be entreated; full of mercy* and *good works*; without *partiality* and *without hypocrisy*. Good works are but the expression of an internal sense or principle. Does not your condition allow you to abound in works of charity, technically so called? Yet you may be "pure," you may be "peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated—without partiality and without hypocrisy." You may abound in the fruits of righteousness—by a holy and peaceable life; by kindly affections and tender sympathies as you pass along this vale of tears; by meekness, humility, sweetness of temper, sobriety and stern integrity; you may present to the world a fair representation of what that wisdom from above is.

Would we know the Christian, we must contemplate him in the relations in which he is placed, and see how he discharges his duties there. We must follow him along the common paths of life, accompany him in his daily round of labors, trials, pleasures; inspect his commercial transactions, and we shall see how, in all possible conditions, are the amplest occasions for exemplifying the principles of our blessed religion. A brief consideration of each of these particulars may present some new—at least some comparatively little-thought-of views of Christian character and duty, and unavoidably conduct to the conclusion that, by whatever means manifested, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him. For religion is not merely the performance of a specified round of duties, but a *principle*, giving energy and character to his whole conduct. Its most indubitable evidence is to be sought *in the manner of discharging the duties and meeting the events of life.*

I. We will look for the Christian as the *hard-working man*—his bodily powers taxed to the utmost and his mind absorbed in his daily labors. How in this situation can he honor God and adorn a good profession? It must be in the *mode* of discharging his duties.

The husbandman, for example, may plough, sow and gather his harvest religiously or irreligiously. He may labor patiently, contentedly, with a holy gratitude and pious dependence, or he may toil on day after day, using up the energies of life for that meat that perishes, regardless of the Author and benovelent Agent who gives him strength to labor, gathers the clouds over him and sends on his fields the healthful showers, profusely scattering blessings about his path. There is all the difference of right and wrong, in the *motives* with which he pursues his daily avocations. If he toil merely to accumulate riches for their own sake, or to rear his children, principally that his worldly wishes may be gratified in them, it is sin.

His ploughing, sowing, reaping is then sin—only developments of pride, ambition, or avarice. But if he regard himself only as the instrument of an all-controlling Providence, and the almoner of His bounty, and the guardian of interests commited to him by his heavenly Father, the end for which he now lives and labours is altogether changed. He is now *steward*, not proprietor; servant, not master. And so with the mechanic or the laborer of any craft. Though unable, except to a very limited extent, to show his loyalty to His Divine Master by devoting time, money or talents, he may do what is effective and equally acceptable. He may do all things in reliance on Divine aid. He may feel that health of body and of mind, domestic peace, success in labor, exemption from losses and disappointments, and general prosperity are the gifts of the same kind Hand. He may exercise all that patience and meekness, gratitude and dependence becoming one who has nothing which he has not received.

And where, if not in such circumstances, do we find occasions for the exercise of pious affections—motives for loving and honoring the great author of all good? Industry, diligence in business, economy—not spending time or money for that which profiteth not, are Christian duties the right discharge of which may be as truly godly, as really indicative of a pious heart, as the discharge of duties more commonly denominated religious. A man may *work* religiously, as well as pray, exhort or give sincerely and with religious affection. Indeed, this is nearly the only way by which a large class of Christians can, in existing circumstances, develope their religious characters. Their commerce with the world is limited. The part they take in the public affairs of men is still narrower. Their characters are not tried by the vexations or the temptations of office or of wealth, or by the ambition of learning, or the fascinations of pleasure. It is theirs to rise early, to toil incessantly and to eat the bread of carefulness. But not the less on this account may they show forth the graces of a regenerate heart, and let their light shine. Their diligence and contentment; their patience to endure, with a right temper of mind, the many little vexations and trials which they must necessarily encounter; their fidelity in fulfilling promises and meeting engagements; the promptitude and cheerfulness with which they perform acts of neighbourly kindness and sympathy; in a word, the whole manner in which they discharge duties which do devolve on them, whether on the farm or in the workshop, in the kitchen or in the parlour, by the wayside or the fireside—these are their testimonials to the genuineness of their religion, as well as direct and effectual means of doing good. We must look for the reason of one's hope in the circumstances in which we find him. He must be a *doer* of the Word in the sphere in which Providence has called him to act. Religion is abundantly a practical thing, equally, perhaps, capable of being exemplified in every condition and occupation in life.

II. A further illustration of piety may be found *in the adverse circumstances of life.*

Sin has brought into the world a fruitful progeny of woe. The path of life leads through shades as well as lights. It is called the "vale of tears"—a state of suffering rather than of doing or of enjoying. The whole tissue of life indicates it to be a state of trial for a better condition of existence.

We may therefore feel no difficulty in asserting that its adverse circumstances, its trials, disappointments, afflictions, are admirably adapted to test character. The mere events of life, whether adverse or joyous, are of little moment. As the morning cloud they are soon passed. But not so with the influence they exert on character. Here their footsteps can never be obliterated—they are the very fabricators of character. By them God is training men for immortality. And more especially are life's chastisements designed to work out this noble purpose. They are our schoolmasters to bring us to Christ.

Do you then ask again, how the Christian in humble condition and limited means, is to show, in works, the sincerity of his faith? I answer, he is to do it, by *patience in tribulation*. Who has not taken note of the unlooked-for movements of Providence in his own individual history? How have his schemes been frustrated; his pleasant dreams proved delusions, and prospects fair and promising, been in a moment blasted? How often has his sun rose clear, but before he had run half his course, sunk beneath the darkness of the storm? But if earth's direst calamities do not befall him—if his soul be neither withered by the unfaithfulness of friends or the malignity of enemies, nor his hopes dashed to the ground by some unforescen catastrophe, yet he is the subject of an endless variety of lesser anxieties, annoyances, disappointments, and afflictions. These afford no less severe tests of character. For the soul may nerve itself for an extraordinary occasion—may be unnaturally fortified against the violence of the storm, while the common casualties of daily experience may unhinge the nerves, ruffle the temper, and irritate the mind more effectually than great calamities. The tree, beaten by the thunder storm and reeling to and fro amidst the strife of the tornado, strikes deeper into its root and spreads broader its base, and rears by a sturdier growth its stately top, but a noiseless drought, or the gnawing of a worm at the root, or the heedless boy with his hatchet, almost causeless to human ken, makes its boughs wither and its trunk leafless.

We must watch the Christian along the path of life's common occurrences, would we have a fair picture of the inner man. There he is acting out the principle of his inmost soul. Is he peevish, murmuring, unsubmissive, amidst the common incidents of life, watering the germ of bitterness with rebellious tears and cherishing it in discontent, he gives out doubtful signs of professing that patience in tribulation—that spirit which *suffereth long*—and which is the first characteristic of a Christian temper. Nothing is real magnanimity—genuine patience and resignation to an all-controlling Hand, which does not preserve a Christian temper amidst the lesser evils and ills of life. Some of the most lovely growths of virtue, the most luxuriant and fruitful plants of piety, have lived, grown and flourished all their days in the vale of tears. The thorns and briers of adversity could not choke them, nor impede their progress onward and upward to the skies.

Do you ask me for another evidence of grace in the heart: I point you again to the broad arena of common life. You may find it,

III. *In men's commercial dealings.*

The whole duty of man has been summed up in this narrow compass:

"*Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly.*" To do justly is a work of mighty magnitude. For God has purposely made man's social and commercial relations such, that the discharge of their consequent duties involves a rigid test of moral character. Man is constituted a dependent being. He cannot live to himself—at least not so as to develope the capabilities of his nature, and, except as a mere animal, to answer the end of his existence. For protection, food and apparel, he is dependent. He must give and receive, assist and be assisted. And consequently it is vital to his interests here, and has an important bearing on his eternal interests, that there be a due adjustment and preservation of the rights of property and human rights in general. Here our fallen nature is peculiarly liable to defection. Avarice, pride, ambition, love of pleasure, selfishness in some of its manifold developments, are constantly invading the rights of equity and bringing man in conflict with man. Hence an honest man has been called God's noblest work. To be strictly and universally honest to regard with unwavering integrity all the distinctions of *mine* and *thine*—not appropriating to our own use because the vigilance of the law may be eluded, what, in moral right, is another's, is a virtue not only of high order, but of hard attainment. Indeed, so conditioned are we that we cannot subsist, in comfort and safety, without the constant development of our moral character. To some one God commits property that they may develop their characters by the use they make of it. They now have it in their power either to bless or oppress the poor—to relieve the necessities of others or to pamper their own lusts. God leaves them, as free moral agents to act out themselves, and he will judge them according as they act. If found unfaithful as touching the "unrighteous Mammon," how shall he commit to them the true riches? On the other hand, withholding from others the bounties of his Providence, God puts their moral characters to the test, by seeing how they will walk in the paths of penury and dependence. I know not whether poverty or riches affords the severest test of character. Each has its peculiar temptations, the one to oppress, the other to murmur and defraud. The rich are tempted to overlook what is due to the poor; the poor quite as much what is due to the rich. God has placed both in their respective conditions, to see how they will perform their respective duties, and act in their allotted spheres. Each condition may be equally important. For the difference between the highest and lowest, the richest and poorest, is too trifling for observation when viewed with the heights of eternity. Yet, immense consequences are suspended on the manner of discharging the duties of either condition.

Are you rich? Do you say to one, Come, and he cometh? The Author of your being and the Disposer of your destiny has placed you thus that he may, by means of the peculiar temptations and trials of your condition, fit you for the possession of the durable riches and unfading honors. He will not so much enquire how great have been your possessions, or how punctiliously or sanctimoniously you have performed any particular round of duties, as what principles you have imbibed, and what motives have moved you to action, and what character you have formed during this course of action. If you have not made justice, in all your commerce with men, your pole-star in life's adventurous voyage, and

llowed mercy to fill your sails, you have not signalized that character and hose principles which alone are a passport to the haven of the righteous.)r are you poor, dependent, afflicted, oppressed with toils and cares, laboring lay by day for your daily bread, and glad to eat the crumbs which fall rom the rich man's table; God, who makes your life a probation for ı better and an eternal state, has chosen your path for you in the dreary ale. He is submitting you to a course of discipline which, if rightly ıed, will fit you for a higher and holier inheritance in the skies. He has laced you thus that you may be examples of gratitude for favors re-eived; of patience under the adverse circumstances of life; of submission o the sovereign will; and fidelity in the service of employers. Do not verlook, then, that your religion, if you have any, will show itself in the pirit and temper with which you conduct yourself in your destined sphere. You are not on trial as rich, or wise, or noble, but as one living and acting n your own humble calling. Murmuring poverty, insubmissive affliction, r unfaithfulness in the employment of another, is as decisive a token of ı wrong state of heart and a destitution of religious principle, as the ppression, the pride, or the extravagance of the rich.

In a word, would we know what is in man, we must choose our post of bservation, not where we can see him only in his Sunday habiliments, or aced in the stays of a religious profession, but along the paths of his very-day life. We must see how he buys and sells, how he labors, how e fulfils his engagements, how he acts when in his power to overreach or lefraud, to overcharge or underwork—to prey on men's necessities or gnorance—to misuse or squander another's because in his power—to con-ract debts without the prospect, perhaps the intention, of paying; or in ny way to appropriate to himself what in moral right belongs to another. f the *fruit* be good, we hazard nothing in pronouncing the tree good.

IV. Would you further trace the lineaments of one's christian charac-r, follow him into his *social and domestic relations*—take passing note of he company he keeps, the books he reads, and the pleasure he most lishes. See how he acts the part of friend and neighbour, of partner in siness or companion by the way, of an associate in pleasure, or a fellow-bourer in the field—follow him as he performs the offices of parent or ild, brother, or sister, husband or wife. True religion sanctifies and esses all these relations, and helps to a better performance of their ties. But if, in meeting the events and discharging the duties of these ations, he be morose, selfish, supercilious, disobliging, unkind, avari-ous, where is his religion? It is in vain that this has evaporated in the ayer meeting, or in the volubility of religious conference. If it be not amp to his feet in the common paths of life—if its influence be not seen d felt in the every day relations of business and friendship and pleasure, at man's religion is vain. It may have enough of the effervescence of ling, but not of the stamina of sound principle. It may gild over a v well-turned performances of the Sabbath, but leave the works of the : days "full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness." Heart-reli-on makes man better in whatever relation you find him—better about s fireside—in his field—in his workshop—a better member of society, ore firm when right, more yielding when wrong, more indulgent of the

foibles of others, more sensible of his own, and ever solicitous that if the society in which he lives be not happy and prosperous, harmonious and efficient, the sin shall not lie at his door.

And would you further apply the touchstone, inquire of the inner man what pleasures are there the most cordially relished—what book serves best to beguile a leisure hour—what company is the most congenial to your taste? In things like these you may discover an index of the heart perhaps more accurately detect the ruling passion of the soul, than in things more commonly regarded religious. Would you know a man's real character, you must see him at *home*, where he acts out himself—must follow him into the affairs of common life. But my principle needs no further illustration. True religion and undefiled is not only to preach, pray, talk and profess well, but to act well in every situation in which Providence places us. The subject demands a personal application. The kingdom of heaven is not about us, but within us. Our *works* testify of what spirit we are. Who can stand the test?

The subject affords an occasion for the following remarks:

1. We err in supposing we are acting a less important part because a less conspicuous one. It is as important, and generally more difficult to suffer the will of God than to do it—to exemplify religion in the shades of poverty than on the summits of opulence and honor. He is the best christian, the most useful and the most honorable, who acts best his part where he is.

2. Because we are to look for a portraiture of religion in the common toils, cares, afflictions, and intercourse of life, this affords no excuse for the neglect of duties more directly religious. Men live right because their hearts are right. The upright step is guided by the honest heart; the liberal hand nerved by that charity which seeketh not her own. Diligence in business is but a common result of fervency of spirit in serving the Lord.

3. The subject enforces the duty of *acting well our part where we are.* Our circumstances are no doubt best suited to develope and form our characters. God knows what kind of discipline we need to mature and fit us for heaven.

4. Finally, we infer the fearful and lasting influence of the events of this life. Time is the parent of eternity. Our eternal destiny is suspended on the character we form amidst the common scenes of life. Every particle of time is big with eternal consequences. Every single and in itself insignificant event, goes to determine our eternal destiny. How solemn a thing, then, it is to live! We often hear it said, "it is a solemn thing to die." And so it is, but a more solemn thing to live in such a state as this. For it is life, not death, which forms our character—which fits us for heaven or for hell. Death is but the opening of the book which life has filled up. Death puts the sickle into the hands and introduces us to the field which life has made ready for the harvest. If we live well, we need have no fears that we shall not die well.

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SERMON DCLXXVII.

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THE PRECIOUSNESS OF THE SOUL'S REDEMPTION.

"For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth forever."—PSALM xlix. 8.

THE carelessness of mankind at large, on the familiar subjects of death and eternity, is equally surprising and alarming;—*surprising*, because the world dwindles to a point in comparison with the immensity of worlds around us; and all its joys and sorrows, when weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, are lighter than vanity;—*alarming*, because earth alone is the theatre on which preparation is made for unseen worlds; and neglect of that preparation is followed by consequences, at once fearful and irreparable. The whole structure of the divine administration under which we live is framed with reference to man's salvation; the instructions of the Bible, the teachings of natural religion, the dispensations of Providence, the monitions of conscience, and the ordinances of the Gospel, are all intended to purify and elevate his affections, and fit him for scenes of perfect happiness and transcendent glory. When this gracious intention of heaven is forgotten, and these means of spiritual improvement are perverted, to the hardening of the heart, it is to the last degree alarming.

Nor can the fact of "the carelessness of mankind at large" be questioned. The observation of every day demonstrates it. Who seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness? Who denies sleep to his eyes and slumber to his eyelids, that he may secure the Great Salvation? Are not men everywhere mad upon

their idols? so that when God looketh down from heaven, he is constrained to say, "they are all gone out of the way—there is none that doeth good, no not one!"

Never let it be forgotten that "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force;"—that whosoever will enter the strait gate must *strive*, even to agony;—that whosoever will win the crown must bear the cross;—and whoever will gain the victory, must fight the battle with principalities and powers. Eternal life is the prize to be won; hard conflict, involving self-denial and heroic devotion to God, alone secures it.

What more surprising and alarming then, to one who calmly surveys, with an eye of faith, the character and certain destiny of sinful man, than the prevailing indifference on the momentous question—What shall be done for the redemption of the deathless spirit?

The soul's redemption is the subject before us. As presented in the text, it naturally divides itself into four parts, viz:

I. The object; II. The nature; III. The quality; and IV. The closing up of this redemption.

I. The *object*, of this redemption. It is the redemption of the *Soul*.

The soul is that spiritual and immortal principle in man, which distinguishes him from the beast. This is the primary import of the term. Sometimes it is used by the inspired writers in a secondary, or figurative sense; as when the Psalmist declares the eye of the Lord to be upon them that fear him,—"to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine;" and when he speaks of the enemy as "persecuting his soul to take it, and treading down his life upon the earth." Reference is here clearly had to animal life. This figurative use of the term is justified by the fact, that whenever the soul leaves the body, animal life becomes extinct. The co-existence of the immortal principle with the body, is essential to human life.

Still, the soul and animal life, are not to be identified. "Fear not them," saith Christ, "which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." The death of the body forbids not at all the continued existence of the immortal principle. Though united, they are distinct; and when separated, each follows the laws impressed on it by the Great Creator, the one bursting forth into a boundless sphere of activity, the other returning to the dust whence it was taken.

It has been thought by some, that the term is used in its secondary or figurative sense, in the text; and it must be confessed, that the connexion in which it stands, favors, though it does not establish, this construction.

To show the vanity of trusting in wealth, and boasting of the multitude of riches, the Psalmist says, "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him;" "that he should still live forever, and not see cor-

ruption." This is a complete argument, proving the insufficiency of any amount of gold to prevent death. Our text is thrown in between the two parts of this argument as parenthetical, and unconnected with it; nay, as a thing entirely distinct from it. Contemplating the certain triumph of death over the body, the mind of David seems to repose for a moment on the fact, that there *is* a redemption for the *Soul*, which may be secured if laid hold of in season, though the animal life perish, without a possibility of ransom. It is as if he had said: "'Man that is born of woman is of few days.' Die he must. Dust shall return to dust. No wealth can bribe, no prayers can move, no eloquence can divert the king of terrors. But the Soul, which is in the body, may be rescued from the death which threatens to involve it, and this redemption is precious." It will be noticed that the last clause of the verse sustains, and even requires, this mode of interpretation. For the body, though reduced to its original elements, shall rise again, and be re-moulded and adapted to the tenantry of the immortal spirit. And if by "the redemption of the soul," were meant the resurrection of the body, then it would not be true that "it ceaseth forever"—for the body shall live again and flourish in immortal youth. This, therefore, could not have been the psalmist's meaning. But, when he said, "The redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceaseth forever," he had his mind fixed on the immaterial and incorruptible *Spirit*—which, however associated with matter, is not dependent on matter, and often displays more vigor of conception, more force of reasoning and more strength of affection, while the body is emaciated by disease and grappling with death, than at any other period of its earthly existence. Its consciousness shall never cease. Its understanding shall forever enlarge. Its power of voluntary action can never be taken away. Its recollections will never die. The energies of reason will never languish. Conscience will be ever enthroned amid its kindred faculties, and the affections will gather strength while eternity endures. Such is the Soul, whose *Redemption* is precious, and at death, ceaseth forever! We are to consider,

II. The *nature* of this redemption.—It delivers man from the curse of God's holy law; and, whatever of *guilt*, *shame*, or *suffering*, is included in that curse, is removed from him, whenever his redemption is completed.

1. He is redeemed from the *guilt*, or power of sin. By nature, he is a child of disobedience, and a child of wrath. Carnally minded, he is at enmity with God. Though he possess traits of character that endear him to his friends, and command the respect of all who know him, yet there is no love of God dwelling in his heart, and no submission to Divine authority, and no cheerful yielding to the discipline of Providence; but on the contrary, he throws off from him the restraints of divine *Law*, triumphs

over conscience, and stands forth, a rebel confessed, against the Divine administration.

The Glory of God, though it ravishes heaven, is alien from his thoughts. His eye discerns no beauty in the Chief of Ten Thousand. The songs of the upper world have no music for his ear. His hand takes no strong hold on enterprises of God-like benevolence; his heart beats responsive to no calls of duty, which promise Him not personal and immediate advantage; nor does his spirit soar on high, to participate the pleasures of the Holy. Whether he eat or drink, sleep or wake, labor or rest, cultivate his mind or neglect it, his object is self-gratification, not the smile of Jesus, nor the approbation of God.

In a word, sin has entire dominion over him; not perhaps in its most hateful forms, but in the form best suited to his views of personal interest. He cares not what law of God he breaks, if he may but enjoy impunity; nor does he care how much dishonor he throws on God, if self-gratification may be secured. *Self* is the idol of his heart, worshipped not less complacently and perseveringly than impiously.

Redemption breaks down this unhallowed dominion of sin, delivers the soul from bondage and sets it at liberty, enlarges its vision, elevates its aims, diffuses through it the warmth of celestial fire, brings it into communion with the spirits of just men made perfect, and with God himself, and says to it authoritatively, "Go, and sin no more."

2. He is redeemed from the *shame* of sin. Is there not degradation and shame in wearing the yoke of a Master, hurled from heaven, and scathed by the lightnings of God's wrath? in turning away from the Glory ineffable, and plunging into the deeps of the pollution of selfishness?

It cannot be denied. And this degradation of the sinner is *voluntary*. His course of life, his companions, and pleasures, are those of his own choice—forced upon him by no power on earth or in heaven, outside himself.

I do not mean to say, that he is always flagitiously wicked; nor that shame always attaches to him in the eyes of his fellow man. It is not so. Many seeming virtues may adorn his intercourse with the world, and earth's honors may cluster thick about him. But, I do mean to say, that every sinner would riot in indulgence, but for restraints laid upon him by superior Power, and that it is no purity of his heart, that holds him back from the lowest depths of debasement.

"As face answereth to face in water, so does the heart of man to man." Circumstances of education, social disposition, conventional laws, and surrounding religious influences, operate both kindly and powerfully, oftentimes, to control the waywardness of the heart, while the governing principle remains the same as in the votary of vicious indulgence, who glories in his shame.

You have heard the knave boast of his frauds, and the drunkard of his excesses; the spendthrift of his extravagance, and the miser of his hoardings; the profane man of his blasphemies, the licentious man of his debaucheries, the angry man of his violences, and the infidel of his contempt for the Bible and its Author. And have you not in all this, an illustration of the shamelessness of sin!

Redemption stops these evil boastings. It turns man's eye to the source of all true glory, and constrains him to love the Lord with all the heart, to serve him with all humility and boldness, and to rejoice in him as the perfection of beauty. It cleanses him from pollution, creates his heart anew, clothes him in the white robe of the Saviour's righteousness, and fires him with heaven's devotion.

3. He is redeemed from the *sufferings* consequent on sin, in the future world.

Even here, his deliverance begins, and advances, amid tears, and prayers, and bitter self-condemnation; but it is perfected only, when this mortal puts on immortality.

Sin and sorrow are inseparable companions. The tie that binds them together is not always clearly seen, because the eye is blinded. But that tie is strong as Heaven's decree. Grace alone can break it; nor is it ever broken by Grace itself, further than the power of sin is crushed.

The suffering consequent on sin in this world is light, in comparison with that which follows it, in the world to come. Here every cloud is tinged with light, and every gloom is penetrated by hope; the bitter and the sweet mingle; the sad and the cheerful blend their colors on the same cheek. It is not a world of judgment, but of trial; not of despair, but of mercy. The inflictions of justice, are reserved for the future. Armed with truth and power, what heart can endure, what hand be strong, in the day when they fall!

You remember the consternation of Adam, when he but heard the voice of the Lord God, inquiring, "Where art thou?" Only conscience had then arraigned him. Sentence had not proceeded against him. But fain would he have hid himself behind the trees of the garden, or have plunged into the recesses of the earth, to escape the eye that had ever before filled him with delight. Keen was the anguish of that hour, when the terrors of the Almighty encircled him, and the miseries of the future crowded on his vision!

You remember too, the fear and trembling that seized the host of Israel, when Jehovah came down upon Sinai, and darkness covered the mount, and mighty thunderings rolled around it, and the voice of the trumpet, exceeding loud, forbade the approach of man or beast, while the eternal law of righteousness was announced. Even the holiest and most favored man of all the tribes was constrained to say—"I exceedingly fear and quake."

Now, if the manifestations of justice, made by way of anticipation, and softened by the interposing bow of mercy are scarcely supportable, what must be the sufferings they will create in the soul, when made in all the awful reality of a sentence from the lips of God, to everlasting punishment! How are they to be sustained, when made not in the gentle inquiry, "Sinner! where art thou?"—nor in the rolling thunder and the lightning's flash, but in the actual overflow of that fiery indignation which shall consume the adversaries! How are they to be sustained, when God shall draw the glittering sword, and his hand shall take hold on vengeance, and he shall throw open all the treasures of his wrath, and exclaim, "Now will I laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh, when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind!"

Redemption secures the soul's deliverance from the torments of pride and envy, jealousy and malice, revenge and despair—from the gnawing of the worm that never dies, and the fury of the fire that never shall be quenched.

And more than this; it elevates the soul to a participation in the glory and felicity of heaven! It introduces it to the presence of God, where is fulness of joy, and gives it a throne on the right hand of Jesus, with a kingdom and a priesthood that shall never fail.

Happy the believer thus distinguished! Thrice happy he, who looks forward, with humble confidence and joyful hope, to the hour of perfect assimilation to his Saviour and his God!

III. The *quality* of this redemption.

It is precious. The nature of it—deliverance from guilt, shame and suffering, demonstrates this. But it still more strikingly appears,

1. In the expense at which it is effected. "Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb, without blemish and without spot."

How often, my Hearers, have the unparalleled love and condescension, the voluntary and dreadful sufferings of the dear Redeemer, been brought before you! How often has it been attempted to warm your hearts, and expand your conceptions of Him whom men persecute but whom angels adore! Is it speaking unadvisedly to say, there is not another theme in the compass of human thought, that so imperiously demands, and yet so rarely receives, undivided attention; or another, so well calculated to abase human pride, to inspire hope in the bosom of dejection, and enlighten the darkness that rests on "the bourne whence no traveller returns!" And yet, how little is it loved, how reluctantly contemplated!

But, fruitless as the effort has ever been, to render the doctrine

of "Christ, and him crucified," acceptable to an unbelieving world, it must still be proclaimed in every ear, that there is no other name given under heaven, whereby any can be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ.

And, it must be told, that when the Son of God laid aside the robes of divinity, and took upon him the form of a servant, and subjected himself to every sinless infirmity of man, that he might sustain the penalties of a broken law, when he agonized in the garden and when he bled on the tree, it was for no fault of his own, nor from the compulsion of superior power; for he was a lamb without spot, a voluntary sufferer, guided by a purpose formed in the ages of eternity, in view of motives more tender and vast than ever came within human comprehension.

And it must be told, till even the deaf shall hear, that his blood alone redeemeth us from our vain conversation; and that he has not only purchased the church with his blood, but washed and sanctified her therein. Had this work involved only an expense of power, like that which first called light out of darkness; or of wisdom, like that displayed in the arrangements of the material universe; we might have viewed it with awe and admiration. But it was more than this; it was the laying down of *life*, the life of the God-man, at the call of justice and mercy united, as the sole condition on which pardon could be tendered and the sinner saved. Here then, Heaven poured forth its richest treasures, its best gifts, its largest bounties. Heaven bled, that man might never die. Such being the price of Redemption, can its *preciousness* be questioned?

2. In the fact that it magnifies the Divine *law*, this appears.

The law of God, an emanation from eternal truth, wisdom, and goodness, a transcript of the Divine character, is the safeguard of all that is glorious in holiness, lovely in benevolence, and sublime in majesty and strength. It is the bond that unites the interests of heaven and earth; the pervading principle of that delightful harmony which forms the basis of the joys of saints and angels. Can it be trampled on, and leave uninjured the intelligences for whom it was made? Can it be violated with impunity, and leave unimpaired the happiness of the universe?

Redemption would be a term of saddest import, if it failed to secure the great ends of the LAW, while it brought salvation to the sinner. That would be *no* salvation, which should cost the sacrifice of a single principle in the government of God. Heaven would be annihilated, God dethroned, the whole fabric of the moral universe be dissolved, and no sound but of discord and war, be heard throughout God's works.

By the sacrifice of Christ these evils are avoided. No compromise is made with rebels. No safety is left to them, except in the unreserved acknowledgment of the justice and benevolence of the law that condemns them. With that acknowledgement, attested by faith in the great Atoning Sacrifice, they are saved.

Precious indeed is that Redemption, which defends the government of God from reproach, while it secures peace and consolation to the penitent believer. Precious!—because it encircles the throne of God with transcendent glories, showing its foundations to be immovable, and at the same time pouring a flood of light into the habitations of men, and creating new and boundless joys throughout all ranks of holy intelligences.

3. In the perfect adaptation of the plan to the circumstances of men, this preciousness yet further appears.

Were Redemption to be purchased by us for ourselves, what have we wherewith to pay the price? Is it wealth? But what is the wealth of a thousand worlds paid over into the treasury of the Lord? All worlds are his. Is it righteousness? But our righteousness is a falling leaf which the wind carrieth away. Is it tears of penitence? But tears will sooner whiten the Ethiopian's skin, and change the leopard's spots, than wash away the stains of our guilt. The truth is, we are condemned in the fine of ten thousand talents, and have nothing to pay. Silver and gold are trash; prayers and tears are vanity; love and obedience, even, are nothing worth except as testimonies of faith in Christ. They cannot go back over past transgressions, and make recompense for them. We have no equivalent to offer for our disobedience. And no equivalent is demanded, no compensation is claimed. We are required to "come to the waters," there to wash and be clean, to drink and live forever; and then we are free, "without money and without price." Nor is it the depth of shame into which we have fallen, nor the extent of guilt we have contracted, neither the multitude nor the aggravation of our offences, that will bar us from the presence of God, when willing to come to the fountain opened. Wretched and miserable as we are, poor, blind, and naked as Heaven sees us to be, we may yet come boldly to the throne of grace, and obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. How perfectly adapted, then, to our circumstances of poverty and helplessness!

4. In the unfading glories which it pledges, Redemption is precious.

We need an angel's wing, an angel's eye, and more than an angel's experience, to enter fully into that blessedness which remains to the redeemed of the Lord, hereafter. None but glorified saints, not the noblest spirit of heaven who never fell, can fully understand the raptures of those who sing day and night, without ceasing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,—for he hath washed us in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God forever." Only they can know the pleasures of safety who have escaped impending dangers; and they alone can know the sweets of pardon, who have felt the bitterness of condemnation.

Look, then, steadfastly to heaven, O thou that believest! Look to that world where God, enthroned in glory, dispenses mercy to whom he will; where love and praise mingle in ceaseless song,

without a discordant note; where all is order, harmony, security and joy, without interruption and without end! All this the purchase and pledge of redeeming love! Is not such a redemption precious? Believe,—it is yours!

IV. The *closing up* of this redemption. "It ceaseth forever." There is a time when the overtures of mercy will cease to be made; when that voice of love which once said, "Lo! I come to do thy will, O God!" will be heard no more; when the joyful sound will be unknown beyond the limits of heaven; and earth will be no longer the theatre of rich and distinguishing Grace.

There are those infatuated by sin, and led captive by Satan, who will not listen to the voice of the preacher pleading never so wisely;—who are engrossed with the cares and pleasures of this life, and resolved to have nothing to do with thoughts of eternity, and who, cutting themselves loose from restraints to enjoy what they can, risk the future on the uncovenanted mercy of God.

For them, persevering in their folly, there is no redemption. They lie down in the narrow house, unwashed and unsanctified; they arise, unclothed and unprepared for admission to the society of the Holy.

The day of death closes up their accounts. It terminates their hopes. It banishes each cherished illusion forever. The voice of the Spirit and the Bride no more says to them, "Come." He that sitteth on the throne, no more says, "Look unto me and live!" Neither threatening on the one hand, nor entreaty on the other, meets them now; but awful realities of what they once heard much and believed nothing, surround them; and no sounds are heard but of wailing and woe—nor visions seen but of miseries without end.

O, could they blot from memory the recollections that will haunt them then; could they forget how solemnly they used to be admonished, how affectionately they were entreated; how urgently they were pressed to flee to Christ and accept of eternal life; one chief ingredient in their misery would be annihilated. But forgetfulness itself is no longer theirs! Their abused privileges rise up together to their remembrance; the instructions they received from the Bible, the sanctuary and the godly friend; the exhibitions of deathless love at the sacramental board; and the unnumbered providential mercies they shared; all rush upon their minds with a force resistless, and a terror that no imagination can paint.

Conscience, too, now awakes to its long neglected charge, and while calling up their mis-spent time, their prostituted talents, vain pursuits and debasing indulgences, it points them to the throne of an offended God, bears testimony to his justice and benevo-

lence in their condemnation, imposes eternal silence on the faltering tongue, and clothes all the future in horrors unutterable.

Nor does one ray of hope break in upon the darkness that wraps up the sinner who has rejected the redemption of Christ, either from the world he has left behind him, or from heaven above him. No voice of mercy greets him. No angel of the covenant comes near, with whom he may wrestle for a blessing; and no Lazarus leaves Abraham's bosom to convey a drop of water to cool his tongue tormented in the flame. For him there is no Saviour now, no comforter, no heaven, no glory, no happiness, no hope! Fallen spirits are his only companions, and fawning tempters are become his tormentors. Despair broods over his heart. He sinks. He *dies—forever dies!*

Forever? Oh, yes—forever, and forever! Sinner, reflect while not too late, that when thy season of probation shall be passed, when the offers of redemption cease to vibrate on thine ear, and the gates of thy prison-house are shut upon thee, thou shalt never come out, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Think not that tears will avail thee, then! No place of repentance will be found. Thy doom is sealed by thine own act; and no prayers nor vows will break the seal, and give thee liberty. Not even the blood of Calvary will avail thee then. To-day, that blood suspends the execution of the curse denounced. To-day, you are invited to the feast of love, and assured that believing, you shall be saved. But that invitation rejected, the Judge will issue the decree of which you have oft been forewarned in vain, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still—and he that is unholy, let him be unholy still!" Persevering sinner! read there your doom. O, consider—repent—believe and LIVE!

SERMON DCLXXVIII.

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FAMILY WORSHIP.

"A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway."—Acts x. 2.

A true family is one, though it be many. Father, mother brothers and sisters, have, as it were, one brain and one heart. The same purpose animates them; the thought of one becomes the thought of all; and a like joy or sorrow throbs through all. They partake of the same food, and have a share in every luxury *and privation.* They have one treasury of wealth, be it much or

little, on which each has some claim. They are interested in the same diversions and pleasures—usually, to a great degree, in the same tastes and studies. They occupy one position in society, and in the state. Is it not right, then, that they who are one in physical, social, intellectual and civil respects, should have a part in the same religious feelings and exercises? Having each a share in the lower interests, ought they not to partake also in the higher? Having the same larder, purse, fireside, and rank, shall they not have the same God and a common altar of worship, around which they may gather? Having the same blood, mind and heart, ought they not to be of one conscience and spirit, participating in a household devotion?

It is so in every family which is a *family*, in the full meaning of that word—which is a harmonious, living unity, pervaded by a like general faith,—not a mere joint-stock company, not a mere lodging-house of kindred, not a loose association of individuals. It is so, and has been so, even among idolators. In the words of Jeremiah, "The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger." Thus the whole household are animated by the same belief and contribute to the same worship, which is a fitting expression of the one common belief. And in a civilized infidel family, all are tinctured with the same creed of denial, and all worship in reality, if not in form, whatever earthly idol, or shadowy abstraction, is set up in the place of God. Much more is this community of feeling and act, in a truly enlightened and religious household, illustrated throughout Bible history and by all our observation. For example, the first act of Noah, after the Deluge, was to build a family altar; in a later age, Joshua declared that "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." David "returned to bless his household;" in Gospel times, children were brought to Christ, as they are now brought in prayer, that he may bless them; and we find Cornelius commended because, as a devout man, he feared the Lord with all his house, and prayed to God always. The fair inference is that he maintained household worship; and it is said that his prayers came up for a memorial before God, that is, obtained favor. And so looking along down the ages to the present time, we find that it has been an immemorial usage in pious families—so much so that it is generally held to be a momentous Christian duty, whether fulfilled or neglected.

These, then, are our first reasons for Family Worship, namely, that a household, being united in all other interests, should be so in religious sentiment and observance; that, as a fact, it *is* so even among the heathen; and that, everywhere, there is usually a household uniformity of non-religious feeling and custom, if not of religious; that where there is a fireside piety, it is fitting and

imperative that it go forth into the act of fireside devotion; and, moreover that it *has* been so in all ages, and *is* so, in every really devoted family—is indeed taught by Scriptural example and doctrine. Here are some five considerations in favor of the blessed usage.

Not to dwell upon these, let us notice next, in this connection, the exceeding and sacred importance of the household, as a fundamental part of the scheme of nature, providence and grace. It is God who, in David's words, "setteth the solitary in families." The household is at first a man's very personality, and it is the first little community, church and state, into which he comes. As, therefore, we have religious observances peculiar to each sphere of life, there should be those peculiar to that sphere which is first of all, and indeed underlies and embraces all others. Since man, as an individual, should withdraw to commune alone with God; and, as a member of Christ's body, should meet his brethren for prayer; and, as a member of the community, should unite in the public worship of the Sabbath; and, as a citizen, should swell the chorus of national thanksgiving and prayer; and, as a part of the rational universe, should join in spirit with the adorations of Heaven itself, of all holy intelligences,—should not man, as a member of the household, have household prayer? The individual soul, the church, the community, the state, and the angelic world, has each its worship, in its several capacity; is the family a sphere too unimportant to have its worship also? It is rather the epitome of all spheres of life, all institutions, all modes of existence. Especially is it, or should it be, the image of the church of God—the first miniature church, and so should have its worship, and keep in view chiefly its sacred character. Happy is that home which is in such a case, whose God is the Lord! God would enlist in his loving service all the strength of solitary thought, and all the strength of church-life, and of congregational sympathy, and of national feeling, and of heavenly communion; so would he gather up the tender ties of relationship between father, mother, sister and brother, and twine them into another golden cord, to bind the soul to his throne—often the strongest cord of all.

Further, the usage accords with the injunctions to various and frequent prayer. Cornelius "prayed to God alway;" we are exhorted to "pray without ceasing," and, again, "to pray always with *all* prayer and supplication, and *in everything* with thanksgiving to make our wants known to God"—in other words, to observe all kinds, and on all suitable occasions. What kind of prayer is more beautifully distinct as a species, than the one in question? What occasions more suitable than the ordinary ones of family life—the assembling to partake of the morning or evening bounty of God's providence, or the occasion of retiring to rest? And then how *much* occasion at these times!—how much

reason to pour forth united thanks for the blessings enjoyed in common by the least prosperous household, to seek pardon together for sins to which *all* may be accessory, and to ask a continuance of home blessings, earthly and heavenly. Then, too, how powerfully does the usage suit itself to the unusual occasions of the house!—sickness, extraordinary troubles, disobediences, unexpected blessings, separations, departures on journeys, and—deaths. They only, who have for years gathered around the home-altar, know that no joy, no consolation, drawn from the world, found even in individual religion and private prayer, can be compared to the flame of gratitude in joy, and of comfort in sorrow, which is kindled on that altar—that altar which is, indeed, made of loving hearts, beating with the same blood and cemented together in prayer. There are some who observe fireside devotion on extraordinary occasions, so evidently good and needful is it then. But, every day, there is new and varied occasion; and any ordinary one may, unknown to us, be destined to be memorable. The family, separating as usual in the morning or at night, may never meet again in life!

Further, home blessings, particularly of a spiritual kind, are no doubt often secured in this way alone—such as otherwise never would have been granted by Heaven. One of the great arguments for public Sabbath worship, in unison with our neighbors and men everywhere, is, that then we are of course drawn to think of our mercies and needs as a community, a nation and a world; for a prayer-meeting, it is, that then we feel the burden of our church gratitude and wants; for closet-devotion, it is, that our attention is there chiefly called to our own personal account with God. And so, for Household Prayer, a great reason is, that our hearts thus best may bear the burden of home interests to the throne of grace; these weigh strongly upon us then; we offer definite and urgent and all-embracing prayer, with necessary reference to these; and, furthermore, we have the promise that where a few are met in Christ's name, and are agreed as touching anything they shall ask, it shall be granted them. The special direction and earnestness thus given to prayer, and the promise laid hold upon, make it doubly sure, that many home blessings are gained which would have been in no other way. A prayerful home knows not how much it gains; a prayerless one knows not how much it loses.

In the next place, where there are children, the parent is pledged to a holy example, by offering prayer daily in their presence. He feels, or should deeply feel, that he has committed himself, by the solemn act, to lead a life before them consistent with his prayers. No doubt every father, or mother, who is in the practice, is conscious of this virtual pledge—this blessed, needful pledge, additional to all others, and stronger than all others in this respect, that it is a daily one and is made before

all the household. All prayer is also a promise to do our part in securing its answer. The man who asks of God success in an enterprise, is thereby committed to do his own part in the enterprise. Family supplication commits to a pursuit of the specific blessings sought, and in general it holds up those especially who lead in it as people of prayer, and therefore of careful life, if they would be consistent. But it is also a pledge on the part of *all*, since all, by the act of kneeling, profess to join in it. For instance, if the prayer be to "grow in grace," each member of the house, uniting in it, is bound to strive after every grace—the graces of faith, patience, forgiveness, love, and the rest. And we all need to join in these daily pledges involved in family prayer; so weak are we—so many the temptations that beset us, especially to an unchristian spirit in the household—that we need to commit and bind and oblige ourselves to be right, and do rightly and only rightly. Shall men give the pledge of a promissory note for a paltry sum of money, or be sworn into a small office, and shall they not give all surety, by social prayer and otherwise, to pay that duty to God, to men, to their own friends, which is more precious than gold, and to fulfil those high offices of home, which are more grand and momentous than those of Judge, President, or King.

But, after all the sureties we give, we are still imperfect, sinful; therefore, further, the occasion is fitly one of confession also, to God, and thus to each other. If we find no grace nor courage to acknowledge to each other our errors, we can at least do it indirectly, by pouring out sorrow to God, in the presence of each other. As it concerns the young, who quickly see the flaws in us, there is emphatic reason for improving such an occasion of humble confession. To guard them against our sins, to teach them to acknowledge theirs, to gain their sympathy, to secure ourselves against harshness—all this alone is enough reason for every parent's kneeling daily with his household, and, if nothing more, at least exclaiming "God be merciful to us sinners!" Though that were all the prayer, it would be much, very much. But it would not be all,—it would loosen the tongue, and make it easy to do what a writer recommends, when he says of parents and guardians that "instead of lecturing their children, always, on their peccadillos and sins, it would be better, sometimes, to give a lecture on their own. There is no other way to correct the mixture of evil you will blend with the family spirit, but to deplore it, and make it an acknowledged truth, that you, too, are only a child in goodness."

Again, in the ways already mentioned, and in others, your children will be taught to pray and praise, and will be variously warned, rebuked and instructed, by this means. "As," to use the beautiful image in the Song of Moses, "as an eagle stirreth *up her* nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her

wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings,"—so will you lift up your immortal eaglets on the wings of your fireside prayer, and accustom them to soar, so that they will learn to mount on like wings heavenward. You teach your children to ask pardon of an offended neighbor, and you lead them by the hand for that purpose; you sedulously instruct them to thank every friend who makes them a gift; many a mother has gone with her children to a governor or sovereign, to plead for some favor. Shall they not be led by the hand, unitedly, to God—trained, at morning and evening, to pray and praise the Eternal King, the Almighty Friend? Nay, shall they be taught to walk the ground, and never to mount above the world—taught to reverence an earthly father, and never, by example, to adore the Heavenly Father? In truth, all your nightly injunctions on them to "say their prayers," will have little weight, compared with your own example at the family altar. Then, too, how much Divine truth may indirectly and sweetly be instilled into them at such times, not coldly taught in lessons! How much kind rebuke may touch them thus, instead of being sharply uttered, as it is likely to be when directly spoken! How much persuasion, warmed by the spirit of prayer, may reach them thus! Fireside prayer is an *education* of the household, an education of mind, conscience and heart. It helps, likewise, to complete and supply what is lacking in example and other instruction—not only to correct what is wrong therein, but to fill up what is sadly wanting. Above all it is a tender education—heart teaching heart; its lessons are written with a pen of fire—are burned forever into the soul.

But this is not all. In my view, one of the chief reasons for the usage is this, namely, it *familiarizes* us, from our earliest years, with invisible things; it makes real the unseen; especially does it bring home to us the being and presence of God, converting it from a shadowy mystery to a bright reality, so that we may have an undoubting, untroubled faith in God, which shall grow with our growth, and strengthen with our strength. Look at that home!—see those children kneeling daily before the Invisible One, as if He were verily present in His glory; see them close their eyes, and thus impressed with the truth, that there is a Being and a world which mortal eye beholds not, but the eye of the soul; hear the voice which they daily hear, addressing Him in whom we live and move; and let them see others kneeling with them in reverence to Him. Let all this be a *daily* customary thing, making impression after impression on the young heart, through many long years—that heart which is always, at first, full of trust, belief, vivid imagination and ready feeling. Will not God and Heaven become as real to its apprehension, by this daily exercise, as any visible person, or the visible world? Will not God and heaven be brought home, familiarized, so that doubt and worldliness, even atheism itself, can never wholly pluck out

the soul's conviction? And how is it in families where the voice of prayer is never heard—where the knee never bows—where, in a word, there is no God? Must not He and heaven ever seem strange, unreal? Yes, though He be afterwards found, yet must not faith, in a soul so educated, be weak and perplexed? Family Worship at least saves a family from being absolutely godless, heathenish—or, rather, worse than heathenish, for the pagan has his gods, which he and all his household worship. Every family, where there is no altar, and no prayer at all, is worse than pagan; it is, both in its *tendencies* and in its just *classification*, an atheistical family—a godless, infidel house—almost a home of irrational animals, that know no God, no eternity, but eat, and drink, and sleep, and die. "Like sheep," says David, "they are laid in the grave—they are like the beasts that perish." Jeremiah pronounces a curse on "the heathen that know not God, and the families that call not upon his name." Let no one say that a prayerful spirit, or private prayer, or sacred reading, is enough; for where there is either of these truly, there Household Devotion is prized; and where there is a living piety, there it is usually maintained.

Consider, however, still further, the mighty influence of early associations, as it concerns this practice. Consider it not alone as domesticating in the heart all invisible realities, but as something that throws a lasting charm over religion, and throws a chain of blessed restraint around us, in after years. Have you been trained up so godlessly, or have you been accustomed to hear so unpleasant or heartless prayers at home, or are you, and have you been, yourself so averse to God from infancy, that you never love to recall the heavenly scene where your father, mother, brother and sister, have knelt with you, morning and evening—never melt in heart with sweet sadness at that sacred recollection, softened and beautified as it is by distance of time—never feel that recollection hanging upon you as a priceless amulet, to protect you from the evil of the world, as a potent charm, to save you from indifference, scepticism and sin—never feel it as a thread, small but strong, binding you back to the trust and innocence of childhood, to the hallowed memories of home, holding you back from doubt, denial, if not crime and ruin, yea, drawing you, year after year, with gentle but powerful influence, towards Christ and heaven. It would be enough argument for Home Worship, if but the word "God," and the word "Christ," daily heard in tones of reverence and entreaty, were forever after to ring and echo in a man's memory, calling him, in all his wanderings, to return to his Maker and Redeemer.

There is another thought. This worship unites a family in a more sacred and sweet union of love on earth, and tends so to unite them spiritually, that their oneness shall be eternal. It *draws them* to the same Saviour; it kindles in them a desire and

hope to meet in the same heaven; and it is a foretaste of the holy blissful commingling of the great family above, where are no mortal cares and wants, no old age and bereavement, no strife and alienation, no pain, no tears, no separation.

It will be seen that some of the reasons in this discourse have special regard to the young, but other of the reasons—strong and sufficient in themselves—are for Household Devotion, whether there be young children or not. There is nothing more desirable and beautiful than that a married life be begun in prayer—that hands, joined in the sacred vow of fidelity, be joined also daily before the Throne of Grace. Though there be but two, let them build the Home Altar, and never let its flame expire. And beautiful and blessed is it, where children are grown up and scattered abroad, or laid in the grave, to see the united head of the house, though left alone and silvered with age, still daily feeding that altar-flame, around which their children had been wont to gather—still feeding it to cheerful brightness and warmth, even as the only surviving travelers in a wilderness would maintain a watch-fire, though all their companions had been lost, or had perished, by the way. And blessed and lovely is it where the widowed mother, or the wife in the absence of her husband, still offers the morning and evening sacrifice in the presence of her children, though perhaps not in the presence of strangers; her more plaintive and tender prayers deepening the impressions made by the father's—certainly leaving an impression, a heavenly echo, which never can die—which follows us to the grave, follows us to all eternity.

As to "the stranger that is within thy gate," it was once required of him to keep the Sabbath of his host, to conform to the religious habits of the house. Assuredly, civility and propriety, if nothing more, would seem to teach that all who sojourn beneath a roof, should conform to the household worship there, if it be not idolatrous, and thus sinful.

I have spoken of the usage as imperative in a pious household, meaning by that where either parent is a believer. Let me repeat the exhortation to strive after a life consistent with the prayers offered, so that these shall not be in vain, nor made worse than vain. The text speaks of Cornelius as "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway." His alms-giving has a double interest in this connection; beneficence is one feature of practical religion; and it shows that his prayers were reduced to practice. The other value of this allusion is that it illustrates the tendency and *fruits* of fireside devotion. It tends to practical religion; it prepares the family, and every member of it, for usefulness in the world; and this is the crowning argument for Home Worship, that it is the fountain of a Christian spirit which blesses not the home alone, but overflows its narrow boundaries,

and spreads abroad through the community, the church, the nation and the wide earth.

But I do not mean to confine the duty to those who consider themselves regenerate. It is just one of those simple duties which if a man set himself to perform, he *may* find, in the very act of its discharge, a willingness to do *all other* duty—a willingness, a yielding, which may be the turning-point of his soul's history. I have heard of an instance where an irreligious man resolved, perhaps for his family's sake, to do this one duty, and who has since dated his conversion from that hour. But aside from these considerations, I cannot conceive how a man, surrounded with all the delights of home, his heart glowing with the warm happiness which God gives him, can refuse to kneel with his companion, or his family, and at least say with a full heart, though it be in broken words—"Our Father in heaven, we thank thee—we bless thee; forgive us our sins, for Jesus' sake; keep us this day, or this night; bring us all at last to thy presence and joy." How can any man, who is not an atheist, neglect to thank God thus for his mercies, and pray for grace, for continued blessings, for eternal union in heaven? And how, still further, can a father, or mother, in this Christian land, if not absolute atheists, fail to join with their beloved children in acknowledging the God of mercies? How can they permit their house, their children, their home, to be godless? Yes, how do they even *dare* to have it so?

Oh! build the Family Altar, if it never has been built in your home; repair it, maintain it, if it has fallen into decay. Let Joshua's be your steadfast purpose, your lofty joy—"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Weep—melt in heart for all your disastrous and guilty neglect, or poor, hurried, heartless performance, in times past. Hallow the table of God's daily bounty, with a blessing sincerely asked, thanks sincerely given. Bring forth the dusty Bible—confess your neglect to your fireside companions—read and pray with them, at morning, or evening, or both, as did your father, and your father's father before you. Can you not find words nor courage? You find it for conversation—for everything else; nothing but practice makes *anything* easy; nor is it *what* you say, but how you say it—in what spirit you pray—that is the great thing. Or if your words be many, recollect that we are not heard for our much speaking; be not tediously prolix in reading nor in supplication. Yet be not hurried; *take* time, if you have it not; the time spent in God's worship is never *lost*, even in an earthly point of view. Let not the Sabbath be the only day when you observe the duty—say not thus, *in effect*, to your family, that you worship God only when you have nothing else to do. Read, if it seem best, with a commentary beneath the text, at which your eyes may glance *for an* explanation of a difficult verse, and so elicit attention *id interest*. Sing, if you can, if it be in your hearts, and

circumstances admit—sing, though it be but one sweet stanza of praise. Teach the young hearts, whom God has given you to train—teach them to join in the prayer. Let it be the simple outpouring of whatever gratitude or wish may spring up in your soul, and not a set form of speech, mechanically repeated. Thus perpetuate, in its life and beauty, this right and happy institution. Hand it down as a rich legacy to those who come after you. So shall your father's God be your God, and your children's—so shall you and they be ripening for the family of the redeemed—the worship above—the Heavenly Home.

A CONSECRATED MINISTRY.

BY BISHOP POTTER, NEW YORK.

What have the ministers of Christ to do with pride and self seeking? What have they to do with scheming and contriving for their own advancement? What have they to do with good or evil fortune in the things of this world? What have they to do with aping the silly fashions and vanities of the day? What have they to do with the gross manners, the irritable tempers, the sensual habits, the vulgar, ignoble thoughts, the idle words, the wretched bickering and jealousies, and the unkind judgments and harsh speeches of the men of this world? What have the ministers of Christ to do with studying how they may please themselves, and how they may win those places which will be most in the eye of the world, and most abundant in comfort and luxury? If every follower of Christ is commanded, on pain of rejection or reprobation, "to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," and that, too, with the promise that all other things needful shall be added unto him, with what fitness or decency can a minister of Christ hold back from the work given him to do, (which he has been set apart and empowered, and bound by a vow to do,) until he can find where he may do it with the most comfort and on the best terms. What sort of spectacle is presented to the eye of God and holy Angels, to the earnest-minded in the church, when, on the one side, churches are seen closed, stations left vacant, sheep wandering without a shepherd, souls perishing for lack of bread; and, on the other, ten, twenty, thirty ministers of Christ looking for fields of labor, standing all the day idle, asking, not where most and hardest work is to be done, but where a certain style of living can be maintained, and a certain scale of expense be provided for? What idea shall we form of that candidate for the sacred minis-

try—what hope of his future career—when we see him bestowing his thoughts and his affections upon domestic pleasures, pledging himself to the duties and responsibilities, and cares and embarrassments of a family, before he has been fully trained for his holy warfare—before he has earned a single comfort by noble self-sacrifice—before he has gained the least assurance that he can command bread or shelter for a second life? What respect can we entertain for the youthful candidate—what hopes for the church he is to serve—when we see him reversing the rule and order of our Lord, and seeking *first* how he may please her whom he hath chosen beforehand to be his wife, and how he may provide for her and for himself the comforts and elegancies which sensual habits and the opinions of the world have rendered necessary?—and when we see him afterward holding back from the ministry of the Word—holding back, not from *vows*, but from the keeping of them—holding back from instant service, leaving breaches unfilled, because there is, in a worldly view, little honor and little profit in the post which implores his succor? Can we say of such that they are conformed to the pattern of their Master, Christ? Is it true of them that "they are not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world?" They may boast of Apostolic succession, but are they of the true Apostolic stamp? Are they moulded after the fashion of those first preachers of righteousness who took their conception and measure of the Christian ministry fresh from the life of its Divine Founder?—those holy men who willingly suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but dross, that they might win Christ—who counted not their lives dear unto them in the fulfilment of their ministry—who combined the hardness and severity of John the Baptist with the glowing love, the meekness and gentleness of the Lord that bought them—are *these* effeminate, grovelling, sensual, self-seeking, and self-indulgent, recreant soldiers of the Cross, fit to be numbered among those noble martyrs and confessors, or to be considered as in any respect of the same spirit? If the Christian ministry is, in itself, the noblest, the sublimest work to which mortal man can be called, where is the *dignity*, where is the *heroism* of it, when prosecuted in the temper I have exposed? A ministry so perverted and abused, is of all things most base and ignoble. O, degenerated age! O, abused and afflicted Church! when those who come to serve at her altars, come in the hope and with the design of uniting the service of God with the service of Mammon!

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SERMON DCLXXIX.

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THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."—JOHN v. 28, 29.

THESE are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. Having announced to the Jews that he, as the Son of God, performed the works of God—had all judgment committed unto him, and had life in himself, everlasting life, which it was in his power to confer upon those who believed on him—they were filled with astonishment. Perceiving this, either from his knowledge of what was in man, or from what he saw in their countenances, he proceeded to add still greater things, and uttered the stupendous announcement of the text, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." As if he had said: Let not what I have spoken thrill you with so much wonder; for though death, ravaging in every age, has filled the globe and ocean with his spoils, I have a key to the caverns where he hides his victims; and at my voice these caverns shall open and render up their prey, who shall come forth—some to rise and shout, and some to sink and wail forever!

The doctrine of the resurrection was one peculiarly dear to the primitive saints. They dwelt upon it with more frequency and interest than Christians of the present day are wont to do. The expectation that their weary, earthy bodies, would spring pure and immortal from the tomb, supported them in all times of persecution, and comforted them in all seasons of tribulation. So animating was this doctrine to them, that their heathen and infidel enemies did all in their power to disprove it, and when they could not disprove it, did all in their power to prevent it from taking effect. Hence in some instances, hewing the bodies of the saints in pieces, they cast them into rapidly rushing rivers, in hopes that they would be thus so mutilated and scattered as to make the future re-union of the several parts impossible. The resurrection of the body is indeed a doctrine which faith alone can grasp, and appropriate to the strengthening of high and holy purposes in the soul. Hence there are not wanting those who have utterly disbelieved it—more who have doubted it, and still others, Christians, even, who from vague ideas respecting it, fail to derive from it that comfort and profit which an intelligent, hearty persuasion of it is designed to impart. "Why should it be thought incredible that God should raise the dead?" exclaims the Apostle; and yet to multitudes the assertion that he will do so, is viewed, as in the very nature of things, false.

In discoursing upon *the resurrection of the body*, I observe—

First: *That it is* POSSIBLE.

When we consider that the bodies of men moulder back to their original dust, and mixing with the earth, convey nourishment to other bodies which the products of the earth support; when we consider further, that these other bodies are devoured by fish and various animals who grow and fatten thereby; it is indeed wonderful how the dust of our bodies thus scattered and incorporated, can be re-gathered and moulded into the same bodies which it before constituted. But "with God, all things are possible;" and to say that this is not possible, is to err, not knowing his knowledge and power. His understanding is infinite, and his energies are omnipotent energies. He who "telleth the number of the stars and calleth them all by their names"—who readeth the very "imaginations of the thoughts of the heart"—who saw "our substance yet being imperfect, and in whose book all our members were written while as yet there was none of them;" must know the several particles of dust into which our bodies moulder, no matter how numerous the changes through which they pass. And he who created a world out of nothing, spoke it into existence at a breath, and kindling suns and systems to wheel and gravitate amidst immensity, hung and keeps them hung upon nothing—surely can arrange the several parts of our *tabernacles* in the exact figure and order they were before. He

"who called things that *be not*, as though they were," can call things which have been, and make them as they formerly have been. He who raised from the dead two children, in answer to the prayers of his two prophets, Elijah and Elisha; He who infused warmth and vitality into a dead body, on its being let down into the sepulchre of one of these prophets, and coming in contact with his bones; He who raised Lazarus from the tomb where he had three days lain; and at the yielding up of whose spirit upon the cross, graves were opened and the bodies of sleeping saints arose and appeared unto many; He who has done this, can surely restore our bodies, though turned to ashes and carried hither and thither by the winds, into their original forms. Nor does the vexed question of personal identity, offer any insuperable obstacle. If the waste and supply of our animal frame is not such as to prevent an individual now from being spoken of as the same individual that he was at the time of his birth; if one bloated by excess, is the same individual that he was when no vicious flesh clothed his bones; if an individual who committed a crime years since, is now apprehended as the identical individual, and punished as such; there can be no difficulty in the operation of divine power, to the raising of the bodies of the human race, sufficiently identical for every purpose which their resurrection is to subserve. The resurrection of the disorganized, dissolved primitive body, then, we may say, is *possible*.

Secondly: *It is* PROBABLE.

In all the works of God we behold a harmony. They are all disposed to some end, and this end is seen in the orderly beauty of the whole. Jehovah makes nothing in vain. The human body curiously formed, he made to be the house of the soul. He fashioned it most cunningly, to suit the convenience of the spiritual occupant. He designed them to live in the company and fellowship of each other. Might we not, then, expect, since the soul was not created to be alone, and the body was created as its appropriate companion, that if this soul passed into another region to dwell, its companion, though left behind, would ultimately go there likewise? If "no one ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it," why should the Creator of this flesh, who having created it, pronounced it "good," cast it forever aside? We behold, too, many types of its resurrection in nature. If night reminds us of the grave, the emerging sun reminds us of the resurrection. If we behold winter in the tomb, we see the resurrection in the freshness and bloom of spring. Seeds fall into the ground and die, but it is that they may bear much fruit; and hence they sprout again and flourish. Silkworms, having retired into their own graves, come out again, "as alive from the dead." Such changes, imaging the resurrection, *why should not* the body of dust, reduced by death, be built *again? Why should* not this, also, revive from its ashes?

Besides, since the body is connected with the soul in a probationary state, we might properly suppose that it would be in a state of retribution. Mankind have pleased or offended their Maker through the medium of their bodies. It is through them that the soul has received temptations. Corporeal propensities and passions have inflamed and excited the soul, and the soul has either meritoriously resisted them, or been prompted by them to the contraction of guilt. The body and soul, thus sinning or discharging duty together, should be punished or rewarded together; but to be thus punished or rewarded, the body must be raised. Otherwise, the very individuals rewarded or punished, are not the individuals who have been righteous or wicked in the present life. We are now complex beings; have a soul and a body. The soul is not the man, nor is the body the man, but both body and soul united constitute the man. Such, individuals have been in this present existence, this probationary state, and to be such—to be the same individuals in the future state—the two constituent parts of their nature, the material and the immaterial, must be combined.

Moreover, the state of the righteous between death and the resurrection, denominated the intermediate state, is represented as less blessed than it will be subsequently to the resurrection. But why it should be thus, except by a re-union of their souls with their bodies, it would be difficult to say. It is not, however, difficult to conceive how new sources of joy may flow into their souls through the medium of their bodies. Further, Christians are now commanded to "glorify God with their bodies." If they do this here, why not elsewhere? These bodies are called "temples of the Holy Ghost"—His property and residence; is it likely that these temples will be allowed to lie in perpetual ruin and desolation? From these and other considerations, we pronounce the resurrection of the body *probable.*

Thirdly: *It is* CERTAIN.

We come now "to the law and to the testimony," in accordance with which, if any doctrine speaks, it speaks with clearness, and should speak to conviction. The Bible on this subject is full and explicit. I will quote four passages—two from the Old and two from the New Testament. Says Isaiah (xxvi. 19), "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise; awake and sing ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." Says Daniel (xii. 2), "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awaken; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Exclaims the Apostle (Acts xxiv. 15), "I have hope toward God that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." And again (1 Thes. iv. 13), "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren,

concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." No argument can add force to inspired statements like these. There is, then, to be a resurrection of the body. It is *possible*—it is *probable*—it is *certain*. We pass—

Fourthly: *To the purpose, or object of the resurrection.*

One object may be, *to make a signal exhibition* of Jehovah's power. This globe is emphatically a field of death—a place of sculls. From the time that death entered it by sin, the earth has been arched with the graves of men, and the ocean paved with their bones. Generation after generation of mankind—the infant, the youth, the middle-aged, and the gray-headed—have marched rapidly to the tomb, and now lie mouldering in dust. What an exhibition of divine power, to behold these, in obedience to a voice pealing and echoing where they lie, starting into life!—these myriads upon myriads, all collected, distinguished, and compounded—atom united to its fellow atom, and bone to its fellow bone, in bonds never more to be dissolved! *Another* object of the resurrection may be, to perpetuate the human species. The human race composed of matter and mind—blending together the material and spiritual, form, as we may believe, a distinct class of beings. It is hardly consistent with the wisdom of God to destroy such a class. But were the bodies of men not raised, men would be pure spirits like angels. There would then be no peculiar race connecting worlds visible and invisible, and thus a link in the chain of intelligent existences would be sundered. But the *great* object of the resurrection—paramount to all others, and which may be called *the* object—is to bring the united body and soul, the entire man, before the judgment seat of Christ. It is, that the actions of all the actors that have ever lived may be manifested, and their final allotments determined; that sentence may be pronounced upon every action, every family, and every individual of all the posterity of Adam, according to their works.

Fifthly:—*The time and mode of the resurrection.*

The precise hour, or day, of this sublime occurrence, we cannot tell. Nor *we* only. No angel can mark it with certainty. It is not for *them*, any more than for *ourselves*, to know the times and seasons which Jehovah has reserved to himself. We only know that it is not a *final* act, but immediately precedes the judgment; and that it will come unexpectedly, as a thief in the night. The *mode*, or *manner*, will be inconceivably amazing and glorious. There will be a visible appearance of Jesus Christ. With a power and glory worthy his dignity and office, he will come, borne upon the clouds. The Lord shall descend from heaven with a

shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God. And as at the sound of the silver trumpet in the Jewish jubilee, the dungeons were opened, and the captives came out in possession of their freedom; so the archangel's trump ringing through the caverns of the earth and the caverns of the deep,—ringing through all the dark domains of death, shall open all, and pour out an ocean of living forms! "The dead in Christ shall rise first." The tombs and sepulchres which have closed over the dust of the saints, will *first* be opened, and then all the dust which has ever been animated, being animated again, the spacious earth will wave with a dense harvest of life! Those who remain and are alive at this coming of our Lord, will be suddenly transformed. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *they* shall be changed, and caught up together with the other redeemed ones, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." We come now,

Sixthly:—*To the character of the bodies raised.*

As this is a matter of pure revelation, we must keep close to the inspired word. This is very copious and clear. The qualities of the glorified bodies of believers are drawn out with minuteness in the following verses—(1 Cor. xv. 35–44)—by a running commentary on which, we may obtain distinct conceptions of their organization:—"Some will say, How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come? Thou fool! that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." We will attempt a brief commentary on these verses. "*Some will say, how are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?*" In what way is this effected? What are the characteristics of the bodies which shall be raised up? "*Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die.*" Thoughtless, unobserving man, you behold an analogous process constantly going on around you. You cast seed into the earth, and it springs not up fresh and green, till it decays and dies in the earth. Now there is no more difficulty in the rising of the body than there is in the springing up

of that seed. The body is indeed decomposed and dissolved by death, but so is the seed; yet as *that* rises after apparently perishing, so may the body. "*And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain.*" And, then, when you put seed or grain into the earth, the product, though in substance, and kind, the same as the grain or seed sown, is yet different in *figure*. You sow wheat, and it rises wheat; you sow corn, and it rises corn;—yet the product springing from the seed sown differs in *form* from the kernels put in the earth; for the product has roots, and stalks, and beard, and leaves. These *last* appear in the process of reproduction. So may it be with the raised body. It may have features and appendages, which the buried body had not. "*But God hath given it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.*" It is because he chooses it, that the root, and stalk, and leaves differ from the kernel that died; and he gives to different kernels of grain appropriate qualities. Such facts in vegetation which you witness, should prevent you from discrediting analogous facts in connection with the resurrection. As to the bodies raised: "All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another of fishes, and another of birds." There is no necessity that the raised body should have the same figure and qualities with the body laid in the grave; for there are a great variety of bodies, and we have no reason to believe that these varieties are exhausted. You see a difference in bodies *here* upon the earth; some more, and some less excellent. There is the flesh of men, and the flesh of fishes, and the flesh of birds; all different. And if, not confining your view to earth, you look *above* earth, you will see that the same is true *there*. "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial, but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory." Bodies on the earth differ from heavenly bodies, and heavenly bodies differ among themselves. Here on the earth, the bodies of men differ from that of beasts, and these, in their turn, from trees and vegetables; and *all* these, from the beauty and brilliancy of those bodies set in the firmament of heaven. So these last bodies differ from each other in magnificence. The splendor of the sun exceeds that of the moon, and the splendor of the moon is superior to that of the stars; and the stars, either from their different magnitudes, or comparative distance from our earth, twinkle with various degrees of brightness. "*So, also, is the resurrection of the dead.*" The bodies of the dead, though they shall all be raised immortal, will possess beauty and excellence, be endowed with perfections with which the human body was never before invested. "*It is sown in corruption.*" In its present state, the human body is a

frail, mortal body. There is a tendency to decay in its very organization. The teeth decay, the eyes grow dim, the limbs grow feeble, the joints relax, and age stamps her white impress of decay upon the hair. So it is subject to diseases acute and chronic, and even to putrefaction. But it will not be so raised: "*It is raised in incorruption.*" It will be no longer susceptible of waste and disorders. There shall be no more hunger, no more thirst, no more languor, no more pain, no more death. They shall be more durable than any material objects, for they shall abide for ever, unassailable, indestructible. "*It is sown in dishonor.*" Now it is a vile body, often unlovely and deformed. No sooner is the flame of life within it quenched, than it is too offensive to be kept in sight, and is fed upon by crawling reptiles. "*But it is raised in glory.*" Every thing vile about it will be taken away. It will be like Christ's glorious body. "Who shall change," says this same apostle, "our bodies, that they may be likened unto Christ's glorious body." What that was, at his transfiguration, we know. "His face shone as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light;" and when the disciple John, who *then* saw him, saw him afterwards in Patmos, he tells us his face was as the mid-day sun, and his eyes as a flame of fire, and his feet as burning brass." If there is symmetry, and dignity, and finish, about any of the handy works of God, we may confidently look for it in those bodies which his dear Son has ransomed by his blood, and modelled after his own perfect person. "*It is sown in weakness.*" It is now but a brittle piece of clay. Its faculties have little vigor,—are soon fatigued, and require repose. "*It is raised in power.*" It will rise with renovated physical energies —energies not soon impaired, and demanding neither food nor rest. "*It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.*" "*There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*" The word *natural* might be translated more properly *animal.* The *present* body depends for its continuance on the laws of the animal economy, and originates the propensities and passions. It communicates with the world without, through sensual organs. Not so with the body raised. Though this is also a body, it is a spiritual body. Its functions are not performed by a union of flesh and blood, of arteries and nerves, but its attributes will be so like the mind, so refined and spiritualized, as to be perfectly suited to mental perceptions and enjoyments. The original grossness of its materiality will be purged away; it will be etherealized into spirit; a robe of light, rivaling the invisible essence of the soul itself. Such is the destination of the Christian's earthly, frail, perishable body;—such the lovely and effulgent characteristics with which it shall be stamped. I say the *Christian's* body, for this description has reference to no other. We know not what odious deformities the bodies of the *wicked* will bear,—what hideous expressions the curse of sin will give *them.* We only know that

they will be so disfigured as to "rise to shame and everlasting contempt." *This* is the language which inspiration employs with reference to *them*, and there *leaves* them! Such is the Scriptural account of the resurrection of the body. Marvel not at it. Jehovah has pledged his word that it *shall be*, and the hour is rapidly hastening on, when it will be all *real*.

In application of the subject, we observe,—that *it is extremely consoling to all the true friends of the Redeemer*. Are their present bodies fatigued by toil, or racked by pain, or prostrate by sickness? Are base passions awakened through the senses, which passions they lament and struggle to overcome? This fatigue, and pain, and sickness, and conflict, will soon be over. These frail, disordered tabernacles, will shortly be taken down, and once *down*, will not be *so* constructed again. Such have but to exercise fortitude and resignation, till the body drops into its resting place, when they will eternally rest from distress and trouble. Have they Christian friends who have died away from their kindred, whose bones lie in a land of strangers? or have they one such, over whose grave the blue wave ripples? Jehovah watches that,—to *Him* precious dust. It is not a stranger to Him, though it is among strangers. From Him it is not concealed, though it lies in the ocean cave, with the sea-weed wrapped closely around it,—and it shall rise again, ennobled and glorious. "The sea is his," and so is the body, though the ship which paused to leave it in the deep has sailed on, and "no man knoweth the place of its sepulchre."

> "Asleep in Jesus! time nor space
> Debars this precious 'hiding-place;'
> On Indian plains or Lapland snows,
> Believers find the same repose."

Perhaps, Christian, you have seen disease attacking and gaining daily victory over the form you loved. You may, "at the painful post of observation," have beheld beauty fading like a moth,—the clear skin drying and wrinkling,—the cheerful expressive face growing haggard and ghastly, and the symmetrically proportioned body reduced to a skeleton. O what a wreck of what that one, to whom your soul is allied, once was! Where is now that beauty and elegance, at which your heart once thrilled with rapture? It is indeed *gone*,—but not *forever* gone. The palid face will bloom again, the sunken glazed eye sparkle, and your pious friend be clothed with far lovelier graces; when, through "Him who is the resurrection and the life," she springs from corruption to immortality.

We cannot conceive the felicity of a soul reunited to a body thus improved. How different from the body laid down, which was fragile, and tainted with sin, will this glorified body be! A proper instrument for the exalted services and bliss of the heavenly state, it will be thus employed. The eyes, here moist-

ened by sorrow and contrition, will behold the Saviour in all his charms. The heart, which was here burdened with grief on account of guilt, will gush forth gratitude for its deliverance. The ears, here closed to error and scandal, will hear the songs of saints and angels. The hands, here raised in prayer, will grasp unfading palms of victory; and the lips, which here moved in prayer, shall shout the praises of Him who sitteth upon the throne, and the praises of the Lamb! O, it will be indeed a jubilee to those who have "died in Jesus," when his voice enters the low chambers of their graves!

But while this subject affords special consolations to believers in the Lord, *it should carry fear and trembling to the impenitent.*

"All that are in the graves," said our Saviour, "shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth;"—*all*—"they that have done good,"—have believed in Christ, and have been led by his Spirit, "to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil," have been unbelieving and disobedient, "to the resurrection of damnation." O what scenes of horror will then open upon the impenitent! Their bodies here members of unrighteousness,—instruments of guilty pleasures, will burst out from the tombs,—their external appearance befitting the guilty souls who will inhabit them. How will these souls shudder at the deformities of their own habitations! How will they shrink from bodies once occupied in Satan's service, and now bearing their master's hateful image! They will wish, but vainly wish, to hide them. They will call, but call in vain, upon the rocks and mountains, to do this. They must enter them, though bearing the curse of sin, to be unitedly dragged away to conviction, and sentence, and hell;—to endure gnawing appetites, insatiable cravings, and tormenting passions, forever and ever! My impenitent hearers, are you prepared for a scene like this? Have you made ready *for*, have you *thought* of, the morning of the resurrection? Very soon will you be laid in the grave;—are you prepared to be summoned from it? Flatter not yourselves with vain hopes. Those only will be raised in glory, who undergo a moral transformation in this world. Those only will come forth to the resurrection of life hereafter, who come forth to the resurrection of regeneration and piety now. Awake, then, now, from a death in trespasses and sins, and Christ shall give thee life. "The hour now is, when the dead hear the voice of the Son of God," and so hear as to live. Every Sabbath that the gospel is preached, some soul starts from the slumbers of sin to a life of faith and religion. Be thou of that wise number, who, in this state of their probation, attend to "the things which belong unto their peace." Trifle not away your day of grace. Hear your God when he says, Repent and believe; hear and *do*, as you would not die the second death, as you would not "come forth to the resurrection of damnation." My friends, you may harden yourselves against this appeal; but

when the earth is heaving, charnel-houses rattling, and graves opening, how will it *then* appear to you? You may now close your ears to the truth, but to the shout of your descending Judge, you cannot close your ears. You may refuse to hear and obey the gospel, but the archangel's trump you *must* hear, and its summons you must obey.

SERMON DCLXXX.

BY REV. RICHARD S. STORRS, D. D.,

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THE SOURCES OF THE BLESSEDNESS OF CHRISTIANS.

"But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. To the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."—HEBREWS xii. 22–24.

THE Apostle would comfort his brethren in the faith. Their afflictions were manifold. The lusts of the flesh annoyed them. The world was in arms against them. Satan desired to have them, that he might sift them as wheat. Dangers girded them round on every side, and often they saw only destruction before them. Nothing would comfort them more than a lively perception of the blessings of their condition, as united to Christ by faith, and sanctified by his Spirit.

To those blessings the Apostle refers them. The language he employs is so elevated, as to seem descriptive of the state of believers after death. But the context clearly requires its application to Christians in the present world. The scope of the argument used is to dissuade the brethren then *living*, from refusing him that speaketh from heaven;—i. e., from thinking lightly of the author and finisher of faith, and to constrain them to serve God with reverence and godly fear, notwithstanding temptations and trials. To strengthen this argument, he refers distinctly to the privileges they were *now* enjoying through the mediation of Christ, in contrast with the terrors attending the introduction of the preceding dispensation. "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words—but ye are come unto Mount Zion, &c. The argument would clearly have been out of place, but in application

to their actual condition. It is not said, ye will come, but "ye are come." They are privileges not to be waited for, but are already possessed.

All will acknowledge it the duty of the Christian to live above the world, and hold himself consecrated in body, soul, and spirit, to Christ; nor is it more his duty than his privilege. Real blessedness attends him when faithful to his holy vocation. Nor can this blessedness be better understood than by attending closely to its *sources*, as developed in the text.

I. It is a blessedness of Christians that God has here established a church, and provided the means of its perpetuity and enlargement. Its foundations are laid in the counsels of eternal wisdom. Its ordinances are settled. The gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

This church is often spoken of under the name of Zion, a name originally applied to "the city where our Lord was crucified." Moriah, one of the two principal eminences within the walls, formed the site of the temple; and Zion, the other principal eminence, was occupied by the palaces of the kings; and being the stronghold of the city, the whole city was called by its name.

It was named also "the city of the living God," because the worship of Jehovah was here alone maintained, and his special presence betokened, by the visible glory called the Shekinah, hovering over the mercy-seat. And because the worship offered here had respect to the Lamb that was slain, and is now adored by the hosts of heaven, it was also called "the heavenly Jerusalem."

"Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," well fortified, and splendidly built, is placed in striking contrast with the rugged mountain of Sinai, rising in the midst of the desert, a misshapen pile of unsightly rock, scathed by the lightnings, and beaten by the storms of heaven.

Sinai, too, gendereth to bondage. There was given the law; there the justice of God was manifested amid thunderings and earthquakes, and voices proclaiming, "*Do* this, and thou shall live." But *Zion* proclaims the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free, pours forth its tones of mercy, comforts the broken-hearted, throws open the prison-doors, and gives the blessed assurance, "He that believeth shall be saved."

In the earthly Zion stood the Saviour of the world, when he proclaimed, "I am the way, the truth and the life." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Here he completed the work of man's redemption, declared it "finished," bowed his head beneath the weight of the world's corruption, and died. Here was his church first organized in an upper chamber; here the Holy Spirit first descended, and constrained the cry from thousands, "What must we do to be saved?" And hence

issued the heralds of salvation, bearing on their tongues the glad news of salvation to the most distant dwellers on the earth.

Hence the propriety of the figure, by which the Christian church is denominated "Zion." "Ye are come unto mount Zion;" ye have entered the church of God, and "are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." This is said, on the supposition that the piety of those entering the church is sincere—that they are truly partakers of the spirit of Christ.

Every true disciple of Jesus is surrounded with a wall firm as the everlasting hills, sustained against the assaults of earth and hell by almighty power, and defended by a vigilance that never slumbers nor sleeps. Trials he must have: conflicts he must maintain: heart-breakings he must endure: but, all things conspire to secure him an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory. *Nothing* shall be able to separate him from the love of God. He shall come off conqueror, and more than conqueror.

Surely it is the blessedness of the Christian, that in the church of the living God, with its holy ordinances, copious instructions, and manifold excitements to activity and vigilance, he has strong security against temptation, and the pledge of protection amid whatever hostilities and treacheries he may meet. In God alone can he trust. His own heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; and every rebel against God is meditating his destruction. And in view only of the fact taught him by the establishment of the church can he exclaim, "The Lord is my helper, what can man do to me? The Lord is my rock and my fortress, of whom shall I be afraid?"

II. It is a further blessedness of Christians, that they are surrounded by invisible beings, whose office it is to minister to the heirs of salvation.

They are come "to an innumerable company of angels." These are God's hosts. We see them not. We know, however, that they are ever about us, sympathizing in our sorrows, helping our infirmities, guiding our steps, and holding us up in their hands. Their numbers, man's arithmetic cannot compute; but they are thousands of thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, "an innumerable company," ever obedient to the will of God, and ready to fly to distant parts of the universe to execute his commands. They excel in strength. To their sphere of vision and of movements we can set no bounds, and God uses them as instruments of communication with this, and probably with other worlds. Think you that the *patriarchs* and *prophets* alone had to do with them?—that their embassies to earth, and back to heaven, were confined to Jacob, reposing in the wilderness of Paran, to Elisha, shut up in Dothan, or even to Abraham, and Manoah, and others who are specified as the objects of their care?

I tell you nay—but the poorest, the most ignorant, and neglected, among Christ's disciples, are equally cared for by the angels of God, as the most noble and elevated. Of each of the little ones, children and babes, given to Christ, we are assured, that their angels do always behold the face of God—i. e., they stand in God's presence, to wait his commands concerning them.

The Christian, contemplating the wickedness of the world around him, and the fewness of those who sympathize in his sorrows, and partake of his labors, not unfrequently exclaims with Elijah, "I am left alone;" and with the servant of Elisha, surrounded by the hosts of Assyria, "What shall I do?" But he is not alone. The hosts of heaven encompass him. And those hosts are as truly his brethren, throwing their arms around him, as if he saw them with his eyes, and heard them with his ears. Do they not love and adore the Christian's Saviour? Is it not the command of God, "Let all the angels of God worship him?" They own him as their Lord. As they ministered to him while in the flesh, and would, if permitted, have rescued him from the hands of his enemies, so now, they cast their crowns at his feet, pour their songs of praise into his ear, and unite with his disciples in crowning him "Lord of all." It is of them that he speaks, when he says that he has "other sheep that are not of this fold"—sheep that he will hereafter bring with him, when he appears in the clouds of heaven to judge the world, and shall thenceforward constitute, in connection with saints on earth, one fold, under one and the same "good Shepherd."

And this blessedness appears the greater, when viewed in contrast with the condition from which the Christian is delivered. Once, the prince of the power of the air held dominion over him; evil spirits encompassed him, filled his mind with darkness, inflated his head with pride, strengthened him in error, whispered in his ear the soul-destroying falsehood, "You shall not surely die," stifled his conscience, drew great swelling words of vanity from his lips, and urged him on in folly's beaten path, till he had reached the verge of the precipice overhanging the world of death. Then, no angel from heaven attended him, no guardian spirit protected him, nor one from the throne of God threw over him heaven's broad shield, and called him brother.

How great his happiness now, when all the myriads of heaven enter into his companionship, draw water for him from the wells of salvation, stanch the wounds of his bleeding heart, and help him to fasten his eye immovably on the Lamb of God! Such is the Christian's privilege.

III. The blessedness of Christians consists also in their union with each other. They are come "to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven."

The family of Christ is *one*. Whatever diversities of feature

and complexion, of education and habit, of locality and forms of religion may exist, there is yet a common bond of attachment, connecting all the various members of the great household of faith, at whatever period of time they live, and whatever part of God's universe they inhabit.

Points of resemblance there are, numerous and strong, between the children of God, and other members of the human race, too obvious to require notice. But there are points of difference too, if less strongly marked, yet fundamental and all-important,—difference of moral character, object of pursuit, and means of securing it.

And there are points of difference among Christians, often exciting surprise and regret, but they are not fundamental. They relate not to the grand principles of faith, but only to subordinate matters; and they are differences only, that admit of happy adjustment by the increase of light and the abounding of love.

It is a blessed peculiarity of Christians, that they are one, even as Christ and his Father are one. One, in their regenerated nature—one in their affections—one in their designs—one in their interests—one in their destiny. Their hopes, conflicts, encouragements, joys and sorrows, are one. Alike, they were chosen of God from before the foundation of the world, to become holy—to be made the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, by the agency of the same Spirit, and the instrumentality of evangelical truth. Alike, they confess themselves poor miserable sinners, helpless, and deserving of wrath, worthless, and entitled to no favor. Alike, they discard all confidence in the flesh, renounce their own righteousness, admit the holiness, justice, and goodness of God's law, turn their eyes to Jesus, as the only Saviour, and behold in Him "the chief among ten thousand," the "one altogether lovely;" all are branches of one and the same vine, derive their nourishment from the same root, bring forth the same peaceable fruits, and impart the same blessings to a dying world. They may inhabit lands wide apart as the poles, belong to hostile nations, live under every variety of government, and adopt dissimilar customs; they may have lived *before* the flood or *after* it, in the prophetic or apostolic age, in the period of barbarism or refinement; and even more, they may continue to weep and struggle here below, or, already wear the crown of victory on the hill of Zion, and pour forth their everlasting songs in harmony with the myriads about the throne of God, but still they are one.

Exult not now, O profane man! that Christians here are full of imperfections and sins. *They* know it. Heaven knows it. It is for a lamentation. Many is the tear, the prayer, the struggle, which the fact occasions. But does this destroy their relation to Christ, and to one another? Does the parent cast off his child, or the sister discard her brother, because the child or brother may have fallen among thieves, and been stript of his raiment, or

among assassins, and been gashed and wounded, or into a bed of filth, where his garments are soiled? So long as the child retains his filial spirit, or the brother his fraternal love, he will be pitied for his sufferings, and carefully cleansed from his defilements. Thus does the Christian, while absent from his father's house, fall often into the robber's hand, and into the mire; his soul is impoverished, his peace is wounded, his garments are defiled; but he is a Christian still, his heart is on God, he is one with the friends of God, and labors to be holy, as God is holy.

Of course, I shall not be understood to say, that such is the character of all professed Christians. Many are deceivers or deceived, like Judas and Demas, like Simon Magus and Alexander the coppersmith. Who they are, is known to God. And as chaff they will be blown away, when he gathers the wheat into his garner. Still, all true Christians are one wherever they live, what name soever they bear, and whatever sufferings they endure.

IV. It is the blessedness of saints on earth, that they have communion with saints in heaven. They are come "to the spirits of just men made perfect."

There is no difficulty in having communion with friends on earth, while they are far away from us. Though we see not their forms, nor hear their voices, we can bring them into our presence at any moment by the power of thought, con over our intercourse with them in times past, and so abstract ourselves from things around us, as to hold protracted and delightful communion with them. No one can be ignorant of this. And why not hold similar communion with our friends in heaven? We have known them, loved them, communed with them here, and in essential characteristics, they are still the same as ever. Death is but a narrow sea, dividing their land from ours. Communion with them is no more difficult than if they yet dwelt on earth, out of our sight and reach.

Want of faith is the only difficulty in our way. Believe the apostle's testimony, that we are "come to the spirits of just men made perfect," i. e., that they surround us, though we see them not; that they contemplate the same God that we do, that they adore the same Saviour, that the great end of their being is the same, and that they do whatsoever they do for the glory of God and the welfare of the intelligent universe; and have we not communion with them as truly as with the Father of our spirits, and the Lord Jesus Christ?

What if they dwell in light, that mortal eyes have never seen, and amid glories that surpass human powers of conception, and have a strength and clearness of vision peculiar to the heavenly state, does all this cut them off from communion with such as are still contending with principalities and powers? Have they no fellow-feeling with those they have left behind them, to maintain

the conflict with sin and hell? Do they forget the trials and sorrows of this impure state of being? Are they not our brethren still?

Whoever has the consciousness of devotement to God, and of self-consecration to the work he has given man to do, sympathizes with every being in the universe, who lives for the same end. And that the spirits of departed saints are thus devoted to God, who doubts? The object of every holy being in the universe is, to show forth God's glory by the increase of holiness and love; it is to accomplish the same work that Christ came from heaven to accomplish, and to which the saints on earth sincerely consecrate their powers. For this the spirits of just men made perfect, labor without fatigue, without disappointment, and without intermission. Must there not, then, be communion between saints on earth and in heaven? They fight against sin and Satan, as we do, only that they never "become weary nor faint in their minds." They rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, and over all penitent sinners, as we do, only with far greater intensity and purity of affection.

There is communion, then, between saints on earth and saints in heaven. It might be more perfect. It would be so, if the *fact* were more firmly seized. Cherish the thought, beloved brethren, and hold more frequent and intimate communings with friends and dear ones, who have fallen asleep in Jesus; nor only with those you have personally known and loved, in the several relations of life, but with saints of other generations and other lands, who, with apostles, prophets, and patriarchs, are ever bending before the throne, and ascribing glory and honor to the Lamb that was slain!

V. It is a further blessedness of Christians, that they have freedom of access to the eternal throne. They are come "unto God the Judge of all." Suffer as they may, from the suspicions of their brethren, from the violence of the ungodly, from the chastening hand of God, or from the malice of the great adversary, they still have a sure refuge in the bosom of Him who judgeth every man according to his works. Is God terrible in judgment?—'tis only to his enemies. To those who love him, it is a consolation inexpressibly sweet, that his eyes are upon all the ways of men, for the defence of his people. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

No attribute of God is more dear to the Christian than his justice. That he is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and of great goodness, is a truth full of sweetness; but even this exhibition of his character is fearfully incomplete, till it is added, "he will by no means clear the guilty." A God who does not maintain unimpaired the majesty of his law, and vindicate the right against all who would trample it in the dust, is a God un-

merciful and unkind. Though he hath no delight in the death of the sinner, but that he should turn and live, yet he hath infinite delight in his own perfect law, and cannot permit its honor to be tarnished. This fact is the grand security of every holy intelligence in the universe.

Whoever will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution; it is not possible to escape a measure of obloquy and contempt, even though exempt from violence. The universal conviction of this truth explains the fact of unwarranted conformity to the world on the part of Christians generally; and hence the apostle affirms, that had we hope only in this life, we should be, of all men, most miserable. The Christian's hope takes hold on another life, and draws its nourishment from the sure word of promise, brought home by daily communion with "God the judge of all." His cause will be vindicated. Satan may stand at his right hand to resist him; but the Lord that hath chosen him will rebuke the adversary, saying to him, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" The perfect righteousness of Jehovah is the safeguard of the humble. The Lord is his fortress, his high tower, and his deliverer forever. And in the way prepared by infinite wisdom, he has access, at all times, with boldness, into the very holy of holies, where he may spread out all his wants and sorrows, and plead with an importunity that cannot be denied, for succor and consolation.

VI. Another blessedness of the Christian is, that he ever has a prevalent intercessor at the right hand of God. He appears not before the throne in his own name: he makes no mention there of his own righteousness. Wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, his whole reliance is on the advocacy of Jesus Christ the righteous. "Ye are come," saith the Apostle, "to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel."

"Cursed be every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." Whatever this curse may be, every child of Adam lies under it. What it is, the Apostle informs us, when he declares that "the wages of sin is death"—the death opposed to that eternal life, which is the gift of God through Jesus Christ—consequently, eternal death. Such is the curse resting on every man, till, by faith he becomes one with Christ. This law, of which sin is the transgression, was the original covenant under which man was placed. Had he obeyed it, he had needed no mediator. Perfect obedience is equivalent to justification. But disobedience must receive a just recompense of reward; and that recompense is death eternal. The new covenant is established on other principles. Not that it lowers the law's demands, or diminishes the obligation to perfect obedience; but

that when the law has been violated, provision is made for magnifying and making it honorable, by other means than the destruction of the sinner.

A mediator is appointed. He is God's fellow—God's equal—one with God. He is the creator of all things. The government of the world is on his shoulders. Angels, principalities, and powers, are all subject to him. Heaven, earth, and hell, alike belong to his dominion.

Though thus *exalted*, he has voluntarily humbled himself. He hath given his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. He hath ascended Calvary, bared his bosom to the spear, poured forth the blood of his heart in sight of the universe; said, "Father, forgive"—"It is finished"—and given up the ghost, amid the sympathies of nature, and the wild storms of human and infernal passion.

Thus has he become the mediator of the new covenant. The demands of the law are so far satisfied, that now, whosoever believeth shall be saved. Let self-righteousness be renounced, and self-abasement take its place; let all hope, grounded on obedience to the law, be abandoned; and let the affections of the soul cluster around the cross, and hope plume its wing on Calvary, and the blood of Christ will speak better things than the blood of Abel.

Not only hath he shed his blood for our redemption, but he hath ascended to heaven to make continual intercession. And there he ever appears, at the right hand of the throne; touched with the feeling of our infirmities; sympathizing in the sorrows of his people; able and ready to succor them when tempted; and to pour the oil of joy into their hearts when wounded and bleeding. The Holy Spirit is their Comforter, leading them into green pastures, and beside still waters; reminding them of their sinfulness, reproving their waywardness, assisting their devotions, and supplying them with sweet prolibations of heaven's happiness. Christ sends the Spirit; and every blessing enjoyed by the Christian, is the fruit of his mediation. The blood of Abel called for vengeance on the murderous Cain. The blood of Jesus calls for mercy and grace on every believer: the blood of Abel's sacrifice could avail only to his own benefit, as an expression of his faith: the blood of Jesus avails to the benefit of all nations, as the ground of justification to as many as believe.

Thus the blood that flowed on Calvary speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, precious as his blood was, to the judge of all the earth. And this is the blood to which the Christian has come, and in which lies deep and firm, the foundation of all his hopes.

CONCLUSION.

And what shall I say to you more, my brethren, in relation to the blessedness found in your present condition? It were easy

to enlarge: it is difficult to array before you distinctly, and at once, the mass of blessing which gracious heaven has bestowed. All, indeed, is summed up in the words of the text; and yet, I despair of producing an impression so clear, so full, so living, as God requires us to receive. Let the subject be pondered, prayed over, and inwrought into the framework of our spiritual constitution. God has not only established a church, but planted us within its inclosures, and done to his vineyard all that he could have done in it. He has assigned to the angels of heaven the duty of watching over us, and aiding our conflicts with sin and hell; he has united us with each other, and with all Christians on earth, by bonds that neither life nor death can break; he has given us the privilege of holding communion with friends who have fallen asleep in Jesus, and with the spirits of all just men made perfect; he has authorized the utmost freedom of access to his throne, at all times, and under all trials; and, to complete the whole, has announced his only-begotten and well-beloved Son, to be our continual advocate, when charged with guilt, either by our own consciences, or the great enemy of the soul.

Beyond these, what blessing can we ask?—Any other than a grateful heart—a heart more perfectly subdued to the love of God, and the faith of Jesus? If we are Christ's, all things are ours; the world, things present, things to come, God with all his riches, heaven with all its glories—all are ours!

One thought more! This being true, how gross and contemptible is the spirit that wraps itself up in the vanities of time and sense, and goes about inquiring, "Who will show me any good?" How vain and frivolous are the eager strifes of thousands of professing Christians, to gain the perishable trifles that heaven scatters along man's pathway for the comfort of all, and the lasting possession of none! Brethren, rise superior to this grovelling spirit; rebuke it in your own hearts, and whenever you see it. Fix your eye permanently on heaven, remembering, that to aid you in doing this, the Supper of the Lord is appointed; and *never* forgetting that "Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. To the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

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SERMON DCLXXXI.

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TRUE ELEMENT OF MINISTERIAL DEVOTION AND SUCCESS.

"For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."—1 Cor. ii. 2.

Such was the earnest, unimpassioned resolution of a devoted, self-denying apostle and minister of Christ. And almost no other man, in any age of the church, has labored so successfully, as an ambassador of the Lord, in the great work of reconciliation. The full proof of his ministry, and the secret of his success, are found in the text and its connection. "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Paul, if any man, could boast of superior natural endowments, and a highly cultivated intellect. He was of high birth, and educated in all the learning of the schools. He possessed a clearness of perception, and a strength of reasoning which few can rival. His call to the gospel ministry was peculiarly marked

and satisfactory. And above all this, he was qualified for his ministry by miraculous gifts and inspiration. Yet he went forth to the prosecution of his work with much fear, anxiety, and self-distrust. He felt his utter weakness and insufficiency for so arduous and sacred a calling.

He was not unaware of his superior endowments; nor did he undervalue natural abilities and learning as necessary qualifications for his success. Still he had no confidence in these alone, as having any power to save men. It was not by the excellency of human wisdom, or by the enticing words of his own eloquence that he hoped to move the conscience, and persuade men to be reconciled to God. His assurance was in the divine efficiency of truth, and of the Spirit, attended by the persuasive, melting eloquence of the cross of Christ. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Christ crucified was the beginning and end of his ministry. Here is discovered, in this great apostle, the lock of his strength. Cut this from him, and he becomes like another man.

Hence we derive this important sentiment:—The knowledge of Christ, the true element of ministerial devotion and success. This is illustrated in the life and ministry of Paul.

I. Let us enquire, What is it to *know Christ*, in the sense of the apostle in the text?

To know Christ as an humble believer, is rightly to understand his character; to appreciate his divine excellence, and his infinite value as the only Saviour of man; to have experimental acquaintance with the way of salvation, by faith in the blood of his atonement. Thus to know him is life eternal.

The preacher must know all this by actual and personal experience; and he must be able to declare the same to the comprehension of others. It is his chief business to reveal the knowledge of Christ, in all his fullness, as the Saviour of lost men.

In publishing the Gospel to sinners, Paul desired to know nothing which was not more or less intimately related to Christ, as the Redeemer of mankind. He would hold up his character to be admired; his name to be reverenced; his example to be imitated; his doctrines to be embraced; his precepts to be obeyed; his life for our instruction, and his death for our hope of salvation.

He needed not to go far from Christ in the execution of his office. The whole scheme of grace and redemption is comprehended in him. The law of God, which we have broken; our relations to him as our creator and sovereign; our moral agency and accountability; our utter apostasy and lost state as sinners; a future judgment and everlasting retributions; redemption by

atoning blood; immortality; eternal life and eternal death—the whole system of gospel truth—all have Christ as their centre, and all are held together and revolve around Him, as the planets and systems in the natural creation are kept in their spheres and revolve around the sun. He gives life, and light, and harmony, and substance to them all.

To know Christ, therefore, as a minister of the Gospel, is to comprehend his character in its various attributes and relations, as a Saviour; and to preach him, in all the sublime doctrines he inculcates; the precious promises he makes; the threatenings he utters; the immortal hopes he inspires, and all the infinite blessings he has to communicate.

Here are themes inexhaustible and of ever-enduring interest; themes which address themselves to the heart and the conscience; which excite our fears or animate our hopes; which pertain to this world and the world to come. Here is substance of doctrine. Here is matter for deep thought and reflection. Here is knowledge and revelation. Here are mysteries of godliness and wonders of redeeming love. On these the preacher may dwell with unabated and ever-absorbing interest.

Here he may gather all that intellectual and moral furniture which is needful for the spiritual edification of his hearers. He may deeply meditate on these things—give himself wholly to them, and yet his profiting appear unto all. He may call in all knowledge and all science to his aid; he may clothe the truth in the attractive garments of literature and eloquence, if but Christ is the substance, and made all in all.

Paul did not feel it to be necessary for him to go out of his way, to drag in foreign matter to give interest and effect to his preaching. He wished to make no show of worldly wisdom, no flourish of rhetoric, or embellishments of fancy, to set off the truth and suit it to the capricious tastes of his hearers. The substantial doctrines of the cross, though as old as creation, and the truth as it is in Jesus, plainly and earnestly spoken, as by Christ in his sermon on the Mount, and as in the preaching of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, in his view, needed no improvement. Even should they not suit the irreligion—the worldliness, pride, or vanity of his audience.

Remarks a distinguished commentator: "In addressing the polite, speculating, licentious Corinthians, he did not attempt to catch their attention by affected elegance, or sublimity of language; for it was his sole object to declare the testimony of God concerning the only way of salvation from eternal misery, and of obtaining eternal life; and a message of such immense importance, would not admit of these worthless embellishments."

Says another: "He did not affect to appear a fine orator, or a deep philosopher; he did not set himself to captivate the ear by fine turns and eloquent expressions; nor please and entertain

the fancy with lofty flights of sublime notions. Divine wisdom needed not to be set off with such human ornaments."

Whatever may be said of modern improvements or inventions, the Gospel, as a system of grace to restore fallen men, admits of no re-construction or change. In the presentation of it, there is great latitude for the exercise of diversity of skill and talent; but its grand principles must, in the nature of the case, remain unalterable to the end of time. We are to expect no new dispensation to patch up, or piece out the old; or save from failure the grand experiment of the Gospel.

Paul would know only Christ crucified, as a Saviour; and Christ revealed a second time from heaven, as the Judge of the world. Christ under the system of grace, is known as the Lamb, the Sacrifice, the Advocate and Intercessor. Not until the retributive dispensation shall be ushered in, will he appear in his power and great glory. He is now to be known and preached in his humiliation as the friend of sinners, their partner in sufferings, the pardoner. Then he will be revealed in his high exaltation, assuming the throne of justice and judgment, "taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel."

It must remain a truth, therefore, forever to be relied upon, that *Christ crucified* constitutes the substance of Heaven's glad tidings to men, and must be made the comprehensive theme of all good and effective preaching so long as the earth shall endure. And here is to be found the sole motive power in the great system of moral machinery, by which the world is to be raised up from its deep abyss of ruins. There can be no substitute. Education, philosophy, the fairest systems of morality, and even a mutilated Gospel—the cross being rejected—have all been tried, and proved abortive. Nothing else can meet the deeply felt wants of the poor, fallen creature, struggling to be freed from sin and the bitter curses it inflicts.

Justly, then, does the apostle exalt the knowledge of Christ above all other knowledge, and make it, by a figure, embrace a theoretical and practical acquaintance with the whole scheme of redemption. And he that, in his preaching, attempts to substitute any thing else for this, but casts away the fine gold while he gathers up the dross.

II. Let us, in illustration of our subject, remark the high standard of devotedness on which Paul resolved, in the words of the text, *not to know any thing save Christ.*

Let us, for a moment, look at this earnest apostle in the attitude in which he is here presented to our view, and we shall discover a spectacle of the morally sublime seldom equaled. Having received from the lips of Christ himself his commission, he has started on a tour of missionary enterprise. We find him in

a foreign land, fleeing from the violence of persecution, destitute and unattended. Spending a few days at Athens, he comes to Corinth, and has already entered the thronged metropolis. A stranger, and possessing no extraordinary marks of personal appearance, he is scarcely noticed among the busy, hurrying multitude in the close pursuit of gain or pleasure. What were the first impressions, or the feelings of such a man, on such a mission, at such a place, we cannot well imagine.

Corinth was at this time scarcely rivalled among the cities of Greece for its opulence, luxury, and fame. Paul had heard of its renown, for it was spread every where abroad. Travelers then visited Corinth with the same interest they now do Florence or Rome, London or Paris. Said Horace, the Latin poet, "It is not the good fortune of every one to visit Corinth." This was no common privilege at that day. Its magnificent temples and palaces and theatres, and other public buildings, adorned with columns and statues and painting, were alike the pride of its inhabitants and the admiration of strangers.

It abounded in schools of learning, richly endowed with the most accomplished professors of philosophy, oratory, and the fine arts; and scholars resorted to them from all parts of the world to perfect their education. The arts and sciences were carried to such a degree of perfection, that Cicero denominates Corinth, "the light of all Greece." Another Latin writer, in view of the splendor of its public edifices, and the refinement of its learning and arts, calls it "the ornament," or glory, "of Greece."

Such was Corinth when the apostle visited it, probably, for the first time in his life. He was possessed of natural genius and taste, and had a mind highly cultivated in the arts of learning. He had a soul to appreciate and enjoy the nicest sentiments of the grand and beautiful. Does he not anticipate a rich feast in this emporium of refined learning? Do we not see him hastening to those heathen temples to admire the magnificence of their architecture, their statuary, and paintings? Shall we not find him in their celebrated schools of philosophy? Is he not captivated by the sublime eloquence of those orators, or attracted by the exciting exhibitions of the Isthmian games?

No! Paul has a more important business at Corinth. He bears a commission from the God of Heaven, and none of these things move him from his sacred purpose. Having girded on the whole armor of God, he is thoroughly steeled against the assaults of every temptation. His soul is so deeply possessed with the greatness—the urgency of his work—that he feels he has no time to waste in the gratification of curiosity or pleasure. Its pressing importance admits of no delay. And, "pressed in spirit," he lifts up his voice, scarcely heard amid the din of that bustling, thoughtless, pleasure-seeking populace, whose very tutela-

ry deity was the goddess of lust, and declares his first message, "testifying that Jesus is the Christ." In him is salvation for the chief of sinners. O ye Corinthians, estranged from God and doomed to death, your idols are but the work of men's hands. They cannot save. I bring you good tidings of great joy. Receive ye my message. Christ crucified is my only theme; neither is there salvation in any other.

Ask me not to turn aside from my single object and purpose for the attractions of your proud city. I have an errand for you of vastly greater moment. I am come to proclaim to dying men salvation from death and hell. My business is most urgent. My commission is imperious. Delay may be fatal to you; for soon the door of mercy will be shut, and heaven will seal your doom forever. Therefore I am determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. In him is comprehended, in all its length and breadth, the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. And here are discoveries of knowledge and wisdom, sublimity, beauty and perfection, far transcending all the results of mere human power and skill. He that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. Repent, therefore, and believe the Gospel.

Is Paul beside himself? Has some phrenzied imagination—some strange monomania, seized upon his brain, that he thus talks foolishness to the Greeks? Or is he the only really sane man in all that devoted city? No! Paul is not mad, as he is judged by some; but such is his sober, earnest devotion to his calling; and such his undeviating purpose, and never-tiring zeal to fulfil his high commission as a servant of God, and minister of the everlasting gospel, to reveal the unsearchable riches of the knowledge of Christ.

III. What were the motives which urged Paul to such self-denial and singleness of devotion in preaching the knowledge of Christ?

We shall find them all drawn from one and the same source. They may all be traced up to Christ on the cross, as the fountain head. The love of Christ *constrained* him. Here is discovered that silent, yet mighty spring and moving power which controlled every act and purpose of his life.

1. His first motive was obedience to Christ as his Lord and Master. He had been ordained by Christ himself as a minister of reconciliation. He needed no holy unction from priest or bishop to clothe him with authority, or qualify him for his work. He was a chosen vessel of the Lord to communicate unto men the unsearchable riches of his grace. And he had received an especial commission from the Holy Ghost, to preach a crucified Saviour to the Gentile world. From this high calling he dared not swerve. His business was marked out for him, and he did

not stop to parley with expediency, or to consult with flesh and blood. He went forward to meet his duty with a firm, undeviating step. His sole ambition was, to be found a faithful servant of his Lord; and by uncompromising obedience, to meet, at last, the approbation of Him who had chosen him for such a work. He could not, therefore, be drawn aside from his single purpose by the attractions of worldly emolument or pleasure. And he would not, therefore, dishonor that Gospel, and preach himself instead of Christ, or use the enticing words of man's wisdom. He desired to be wholly eclipsed by the glory of the sun of righteousness, whom he would hold up, in all the fullness of his light and beauty and perfection, for the faith and admiration of the world.

2. Another motive was gratitude to Christ, as his Redeemer and Saviour.

He had himself been plucked as a brand from the burning. He had seen the price of his ransom. His own eyes had beheld the risen Saviour, and had marked that heavenly visage, marred by the crown of thorns, and those hands by the prints of the nails. He knew the worth of expiatory blood, and had felt the preciousness of pardon. And amid the labors and persecutions he endured, he had derived strong consolation from that good hope in Christ which reacheth unto heaven, entereth within the veil, and is full of immortality. What he had himself already experienced of the blessings of Christ's redemption, was worth infinitely more to him than earthly honors, and treasures, and all things else. Whatever privations, then, or sufferings he might endure, he could well afford the sacrifice. He had received his hundred fold in this present world, with the assured expectation, in the world to come, of life everlasting. Therefore gratitude filled his heart, and he felt that no labor or sacrifice, self-denial or suffering, that was necessary in the faithful discharge of his ministry, was too great to endure for his Saviour.

3. The arduousness of the work to which his Lord had called him, was a motive to great self-denial and earnest devotion.

From every point of view, he beheld the world lying in wickedness. He saw the multiplied forms of idolatrous worship and superstition; and every where the sad and mournful demonstrations of man's alienation from God his creator. He knew the heart of man to be utterly depraved, "desperately wicked," full of unbelief, turning away from the living God. Yet men with such hearts were to be restored to holiness and the divine favor. Even such were to be delivered from the death-penalty of their condemnation, and made heirs to the inheritance of life eternal. The world had been ransomed; it must be saved. From the ruins of Satan's empire was to rise the beautiful, glorious, universal kingdom of the Redeemer. The Gospel was the only means ordained for the achievement of this stupendous result.

For such a work, the energies of an angel were weak and unavailing. He well knew that all the efficiency was of God; yet he could proclaim the knowledge of Christ, and the wonder-working power of his cross, which are the wisdom of God and the power of God, to the salvation of every one that believeth. And he felt that an earnest, untiring devotion to the duties of his calling, and the sacrifice of every thing which might stand in the way of his success, were necessary in order to accomplish, instrumentally, the part which devolved on him; that he "might by all means save some."

4. His estimate of the value of man's salvation, was another strong motive which impelled him to zealous effort and self-sacrifice in preaching Christ crucified.

He knew the worth of the immortal soul, and its imminent danger. He had solemnly meditated on the just penalty of God's violated law—the pains of everlasting death—to which he saw the world of mankind were already doomed; though their sentence was under a temporary suspension. He was deeply impressed with the thought, that the redemption of the soul from the sufferings of the second death, was precious, and that the time would soon come when it would cease forever; when the sacrifice of expiation, which had been made for it, would be no longer availing; that the soul, once cast off, must be irrecoverably lost; not all the wealth of worlds could purchase it; that there could be no further redemption; that man must be saved *soon* if saved at all.

Such affecting considerations as these were what led him, in the earnestness of his zeal for the salvation of men, to exclaim, "Necessity is laid upon me. Wo is unto me if I preach not the Gospel." I must hasten my work; I must lose no opportunity; I must spare no pains; I am ready to die for the Gospel. "For the Lord Jesus is to be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power." It was to save men from such a doom that he proclaimed the Gospel of a Redeemer; and did it not become him to be in earnest?

5. Another consideration which animated the zeal of the apostle, and urged him forward with singular devotion to his work, was the certain success and grand results of preaching Christ.

The Gospel to him was no experiment. He never entertained even a suspicion that it might, after all, turn out to be a *failure*. The high estimation in which he held its great Author, being head over all things to the church, had placed it, in his view, above all contingency. It was not left to the blind fortuity of circumstances, or to the support and direction of feeble, erring man. It was not to fall the victim of persecution, or the prey of

violence. It was not to be supplanted by the cunning craftiness of its adversaries, or by the plausible systems of rational philosophy. It was not to be overborne and crushed amidst the prevailing wickedness and infidelity of the world. No—the eternal purpose of God was in it, and the strength of the Almighty was vouchsafed for its security and success. Though wounded and crippled and bleeding, it was destined to tread down all opposition, and rise up in its glory and triumph over all its foes. Then "the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, would be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." Then should Zion, the glorious church of God, appear "the perfection of beauty; and the sons of them that had afflicted her, would come bending unto her; and all they that had despised her, would bow themselves down at the soles of her feet. Whereas she had been forsaken and hated, God would make her an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations."

These amazing results were to be achieved, in Paul's estimation, not by the ushering in of a new and more imposing dispensation; by a second appearing of Christ in state, and a personal king-ship on earth, with a ministry of risen and glorified saints; but by the power of the Holy Ghost, accompanying the simple preaching of the cross of Christ, and through the ministry of the church militant.

Do any want confidence in the present system of the gospel to bring about the grand triumphs predicted of the Redeemer's kingdom? Do we need a more imposing display to the eye of sense, in order more effectually to reach the heart? Is Christ's power in heaven limited? Is not that array of means which God has made effectual to the salvation of one soul, equally adequate, by the same efficiency, for the salvation of thousands and myriads? Cannot that power which produced the results of the day of Pentecost, under the same system of things multiply revivals, cause a nation to be born to Zion at once, or bring in the glorious millennial day?

We need not therefore slack our energies, or settle down in despondency, in expectation of something better. The *present* gospel, under the present administration of it, is all that we need; and it is just what Heaven has ordained for the salvation of the world.

We hear this inspired apostle declaring: "We preach Christ crucified, to some a stumbling, to others foolishness; but salvation to them that believe. Again he says, "God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." Here is the whole Gospel—the means, the instrumentality, the efficiency, the result. The work was already commenced in Paul's day. God would carry it forward in the same way, and complete it through the same system

of instrumentalities; and the world would be saved. In the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom, in its triumphs during the many ages and generations to come, and in its final consummation, it will appear that the world—the great body of the human family, has been saved, and that only a remnant, as it were, has been lost.

Can we wonder that Paul gloried in being an humble minister of such a Gospel?—or in the honor of sharing some humble part in the accomplishment of such sublime results?—or that he desired not to know any thing else?

6. Lastly. Paul, amidst his devoted labors and sufferings, kept his eye fixed steadfastly on his final reward. "I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He saw a crown laid up for him, whose jewels were far more precious than the most costly pearls, or sparkling diamonds. This cheered and animated him in the darkest hour of his trials and discouragements, and armed him with courage and boldness to meet persecution, and death even, should it be necessary to suffer as a martyr in the fulfilment of his ministry.

Hear a single passage from his diary: "Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned. Thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day have I been in the deep. In journeyings often; in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Yet none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." I would choose rather to depart and be with Christ; for then shall I rest from life's burdens and sufferings, and share my rich reward. Then shall I wear that glittering crown amid the shining seraphs that surround the throne above. This blest assurance nerved him to every conflict, and gave him cheerfulness to do, or suffer, all the will of God.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

1. From our subject, we learn what is the best kind of preaching. It is that which savors most of Christ. That preaching is always to be regarded with suspicion, which does not have Christ as its centre, where all its lines of doctrine meet and blend in harmony. Not Christ a teacher; not Christ our example; not Christ a martyr to the truth, merely. Others, mere men, were all this. But *Christ on the cross*, as God manifest in the flesh to become an offering and a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Here centre all the promises. It is here we find a balm for every wound. Here must we build all our hopes. And that preaching which does not *here* derive all its light and life and power, is but another gospel.

2. We learn that it is no part of a minister's duty to seek to please men. If they are pleased with the truth, it is well. But how can a minister of Christ turn aside from a full and faithful exhibition of the gospel, to suit the wishes of those whom the truth will not please? That preaching is not always the most profitable which is the most pleasing, or the most applauded. Paul's preaching was not that which would have pleased his hearers best; or that which would have rendered himself most admired and popular. Had he swerved a little from his single purpose, and catered to the wishes of that idolatrous, pleasure-loving people, he might have shunned the offence of the cross, and met a very different reception at Corinth. But it would have been at the sacrifice of immortal souls. In "the whole counsel of God," there is much that is offensive to the unsanctified heart. In faithfully declaring it, we must necessarily displease the wicked. For this reason, even Christ was not a very acceptable preacher. He did not catch the popular ear. His preaching was too practical, too pointed; was savored too much of heaven, and too little of this world, to please the populace. For once they cried, Hosanna! But the note was soon changed to, "Crucify him, crucify him!"

Have we not good reason to suspect, that either we have not the spirit, or the words of our blessed Master, if our preaching is such as to win the applause of the idolatrous worlding, or the votary of pleasure, or gain the acclamation of the multitude? We are safe in keeping near to our Saviour, and preaching only Christ. Paul had determined to deal faithfully with his hearers, and preach to them the plain Gospel, the whole truth, though they should stone him.

3. We see in the light of our subject, the great value and importance of the Gospel to sinners. Paul exemplified in his life, and declared in the text, his estimation of it. There is no other remedy for sin, and the calamities in which the soul of man is overwhelmed.

This Gospel, my hearers, is as important for you as it was for Paul and the Corinthians. Will you not value it above all price, and make its rich provisions of mercy yours? Or shall it be preached to you in vain, and the gracious words of hope and promise finally prove to you a savor of death unto death? See you to this, come now to Christ; believe in him, and he shall be to you, "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

Brethren in the ministry, we see the greatness and the dignity of our calling. It has its trials and its far-reaching responsibilities; and it has, too, its great reward. "They that turn many

to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever." Are we not urged by every consideration to a more earnest consecration to our work? Time hastens! Souls are perishing! The Gospel only can save. Death is among us. The Lord is calling his servants home from the vineyard. Do we not hear the Master saying unto us, "Be ye also ready, for behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

SERMON DCLXXXII.

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ACQUAINTANCE WITH GOD.

"Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace; thereby good shall come to thee."—Job xxii. 21.

When an ancient philosopher was asked, "Who and what is God?" he requested a day to frame his answer; but at the expiration of that he had only become the more deeply perplexed, and prayed that he might have yet another day. And when that had passed, he asked for still another. And having thus secured in succession various extensions of time, he finally replied that the more he had pondered the question, the more perplexed he had become; and the more involved in mystery the nature and attributes of Deity appeared.

And thus with every man who would attempt with his own short ladder to scale the loftiest heights, or with his own scanty plumb-line to fathom the deepest depths of the Divine nature. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" But there is a kind and degree of acquaintance with God which the soul of man may attain to, and to that the text exhorts us.

I. Acquaintance with God! The thought is inspiring, the very conception is ennobling, and the reality transcendently glorious. How may it be obtained?

1. Through his works. The sculptor reveals himself in the statue; the artist in his picture; the mechanic in his mechanism. And the whole universe, whose maker and builder is God, is but one continuous and glorious revelation of the Great Architect. "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to

dwell in. The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament showeth his handy work; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their voice is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." It is he that hath painted the sunset clouds with their gorgeous hues, and that hath penciled with its delicate beauty the blushing violet. The sweeping tornado, and the whispering zephyr, the rolling tide, and the rippling brook, the towering cliff, and the mountain upon which the clouds do rest, all do speak the praises and proclaim the glory of Him that hath made them. There are "tongues in the trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in every thing." To the ear that is attuned to hear it, there is music in the spheres; "there's music in the sighing of a reed; there's music in all things, if men had ears; there's music in the gushing of a rill; the earth is but an echo of the spheres;" every star hath its voice; every waving leaf hath its utterance, and all speak to us of God. The sun by day and the moon by night discourse to us the wondrous tale:—

"Forever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine."

To the eye that is open to see it, every living thing, from the leviathan of the deep, where water-spouts ascend to heaven, to the insect whose home is of too minute dimensions to be discovered by the unaided eye; every plant, "from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall," bears an inscription in the hand-writing of God. Every stone has engraven upon it His name, and happy is he that has learned to read it. "He stretcheth out the mantle over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them. He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth the cloud upon it. He hath compassed the water with bounds, until the day and night come to an end. The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof. By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens: his hand hath formed the crooked serpent. Lo, these are parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?"

2. We become acquainted with God through his providential government of the world. His kingdom extendeth over all. Upon the tomb-stone of every nation that has ever perished by reason of its sins, its tyrannies, its debaucheries, its sensual and degrading vices, is written the justice of God. The prosperity of those nations that have regarded justice, and acknowledged the Divine supremacy, is a standing monument of his goodness and love of virtue; while the prolonged existence of such as have trampled upon equity and humanity bears testi-

mony to his forbearance. But the providential government of God is to be viewed through a long vista of years to be understood at all: and even then most imperfectly, without the aid of other light.

3. We become acquainted with God through the human soul. God has made man in his own image; and though that image has been defaced, and his inscription of his law upon the human heart greatly marred, yet even deciphering the few remaining vestiges of that inscription, the character of Him whose handwriting they are, is clearly revealed. Every approbation of virtue, and every disapprobation of vice; every justification of right, and every condemnation of wrong, are unimpeachable testimony to the integrity of the Divine character. The maker of the human soul never formed it so that it could not do otherwise than condemn himself. And whensoever by turning our eyes within, we read the law written upon the heart, we see in that law the transcript of the divine character. When we find ourselves pronouncing sentence upon our own sins, or upon the sins of others, we listen only to the echo of God's voice within the soul. And when we hear the utterance of the moral nature within us sanctioning the right, though we the wrong pursue, we know that God made the soul for virtue, and that He himself is the impersonation of all that is beautiful and good and true.

4. But especially do we become acquainted with God through his written word. The works of nature are an imperfect revelation—manifesting chiefly the natural attributes of the Deity. His providential government is unsatisfactory, for we see it but in part; so brief a segment of eternity is it that we can survey at all. Wrong sometimes triumphs; judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off; truth is fallen in the street; and equity cannot enter; yea, truth faileth: and he that departeth from evil is made a prey: but it is only for a time, and times, and the dividing of a time.

> "Truth crushed to earth will rise again;
> The eternal years of God are hers;
> While error wounded writhes in pain,
> And dies amid her worshippers."

In the end the character and government of God will be vindicated; the sceptre of iniquity will be broken; justice and truth reinstated upon the throne; and though clouds and darkness are round about him to-day, yet we are assured that justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne forever. This assurance the Word does not fail to give us.

What is dark in Providence is made light in Revelation; what is crooked in time is made straight in eternity; what is rough to our present earthly perceptions will be made smooth to the purer and more perfect vision of future years. It is said that in ex-

amining through a magnifying glass the most perfect of the works of art, great imperfections and roughnesses are clearly discovered, while in examining the roughest and most uncouth of all God's works with the most powerful compound solar microscope, every apparent imperfection disappears. Thus when the ways of God are seen in the light of eternity, and through those eyes whose power of vision can discover the hidden springs of the complicated machinery, and comprehend all its parts in their natural relations and dependencies, all doubts will be solved, all difficulties will be explained. This eternal light shines from the Bible; and faith furnishes us with those spiritual eyes. The Psalmist saw wicked men and wicked rulers spreading themselves like the green bay tree. Prosperity attended their oppressions; their life was a life of ease, and there were no pains in their death; and he was ready to stumble. Was there no God in the heavens?—and did he not rule over all? He could not understand it; and the dark brooding wings of Atheism hung over him. His feet were almost gone; his steps had well nigh slipped. He was envious of the foolish, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked. "Their eyes," he says, "stand out with fatness; they have more than heart can wish. They are corrupt; they speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens; their tongue walketh through the earth. Behold these are the ungodly who prosper in the world; they increase in riches." And then he was ready to say—"Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain; and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." He was perplexed and confounded. "When I thought to know this, it was too wonderful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their END. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction." By faith we enter into this sacred place, and learn that 'tis not the whole of life to live, nor all of death to die; and that with God a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years. His government is upon the broad scale of eternity. It is not to be expected that a child should understand the diplomacy of the cabinet. It is not to be complained of that an infant does not comprehend the plans of the statesman or the general. Much less that we should comprehend from the little we see of the Divine administration, the much we do not see. Faith is to be the evidence of things not seen; and that faith must rest on the testimony of the Word. Therein is set forth the harmony of the Divine character—justice and mercy are met together—righteousness and peace have kissed each other. The partial and apparently distorted view of God's character and attributes which nature and Providence presents, is here corrected, expanded, and harmonized.

But let me be understood. It is the Bible of which I speak—not systems of divinity—not confessions of faith. The writings of Augustine and Pelagius, of Calvin and Arminius, have revealed to us their respective authors. The Council of Trent, the Council of Nice, and the Westminster Assembly, and divers other assemblies and councils, great and small, grand and subordinate, have severally revealed themselves. In the writings of Luther we have a portrait of Luther; in the writings of Wesley a portrait of Wesley; in the writings of Edwards a portrait of Edwards. In the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, in the Discipline of the Methodist Church, in the Treatise of the Baptists, and in the Catechism, longer or shorter, we have a portrait of the men that made them. (For they were but men, and uninspired.) But here we have the only true, full-sized portrait that God has ever given us of Himself. Here is no caricature. The others are worthy of study. They are the work of great and good men. They are, as they claim, more or less genuine copies of the original; but none of them faultless; and never, never should our gaze be fixed so intently upon the mere copy, however perfect we may deem it, that we shall fail for a moment to recognize the Divine original as the only true and safe standard of appeal in all things pertaining to God and religion. With regard to all confessions, and treatises, and systems of divinity, we are ever to say—"to the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this, it is because there is no light in them."

The Papacy may rest upon traditions and the faith of the church; and upon the constructions and interpretations of the priest, the bishop, and the Pope; but, "the Bible—the Bible only is the book for Protestants;" no scripture is of private interpretation, and each individual is responsible for his own.

5. We become acquainted with God through his Son Jesus Christ; who was God manifest in the flesh; and in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He is set forth as the express image of his person; and in his life and death and character are mirrored forth the glories of the divine nature, so that he could say—"He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." And in all the meekness and love, the self-denial and beneficence embodied in the life of the man of sorrows, we see illustrated the distinguishing attributes of the Eternal Father. Study that life, and you have revealed to you the transcendent excellence of the Godhead.

6. But besides the external embodiment of Himself in his Son, we have given to us the invisible and omnipresent Spirit, who shall take of the things of Christ and show them unto us:—who can come to the inner temple of the soul, and there present to the spiritual eye, a spiritual God. "It is well for you," said the Master, "that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter

will not come; but if I go away I will send him to you." Even the personal presence of the Saviour, with his glowing words of life, was less to be desired than the direct communication to the soul which the Spirit can make. A philosopher may give the thoughts of his own mind to the mind of his pupil, through the poor medium of words; an orator may so array his glowing images as to write the burning truth upon our hearts; but neither the philosopher nor the orator can transfuse themselves into the souls of those that hear. This God can do by his Spirit; and thus introduce himself directly to the inner man. And thus he is ready to give us the most intimate acquaintance with himself which the heart can desire or conceive.

Thus have we sketched in brief the means of an acquaintance with God—an acquaintance which is a peaceful one when the heart is in sympathy with God, and cheerfully submissive to his will. And we inquire:

II. What are the results of this peaceful acquaintance? "Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace; thereby GOOD shall come to thee." What good? I reply,

1. Great mental enlargement. The greatest conception of human intelligence is the idea of God. No other thought so fills the entire spiritual vision. And a constant association with that thought as it lives in the soul, expands the mind as no other can. We are affected by the character of those with whom we associate. And he who lives and walks with God, possesses a mental elevation corresponding measurably with the nature of Him with whom he is thus brought into association. The best of all knowledge is the knowledge of God; the greatest of all sciences is the science which acquaints us with God. In its widest sense it is the comprehension of all science. The mind that is held in hourly contact with the great fact of God's existence, and government, and attributes—his infinity, his omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence, cannot fail to be enlarged. Its views are high as heaven, and broad as eternity. Acquaintance with GOD! The very name takes the sweep of all time and all space—comprehends all heights and all depths. The mind thus winged soars to heaven, roams through the universe, traverses the past, the present, and the *to-come*. Its view of the history of the world is from a higher stand-point. Acquaintance with God gives unity to the universe; all its parts are contemplated as portions of one stupendous whole. The study of the world from the Atheistic stand-point is but a farce. It is the play of Hamlet with the part of Hamlet left out. The study of history, politics, and the rise and fall of nations is but barrenness, confusion, and chaos. Atheistic philosophers must always lack breadth of mental vision. Acuteness and wit they have sometimes had, but never breadth nor depth. Their system necessarily cramps and belittles the mind. In surveying the history of the world, the recognition of

the Divine existence and government, brings light out of darkness and order out of chaos.

2. But the heart is enlarged as well as the mind. Its sympathies are wider, its charities are broader. All creatures are seen as the creatures of God. And as he sendeth his rain upon the just and the unjust, and causeth his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, the heart learns the lesson of generous sympathy and godlike forbearance.

Acquaintance with God inspires confidence in his government. Taken into the inner sanctuary, we see the hand that moves the universe. Without we see the working of the mighty machinery; within, the power that guides it. And the heart no longer fears. There may be many things that we understand not; but from our inner acquaintance with God, and our firm assurance of the rectitude of the Divine character, we exclaim with Abrahamic faith —"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Faith whispers in the ear—"What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter." Though he allows sin to triumph for a time, we know that it is not because he approves it, or looks upon it with the least degree of allowance; but that sin may work itself out, and show itself in its true deformity. Our faith is not staggered. We know him too well to mistrust him.

And all the events of life pertaining to ourselves, however mysterious they may be, can awaken no distrust of God. Terrors may gather around us, but they make us not afraid; the banner of Heaven's love and protection waves over us. God reigns, and we are at peace with him and with all his doings. We may not understand the power of his thunder, but we are not terrified by it. It is God's thunder, commissioned and sent by him, and controlled by his hand, and we fear it not.

An officer on board ship in the midst of a fierce tempest, while every moment the vessel was expected to founder, and all around were terror, wild shrieks and confusion, was himself calm. His wife had partaken of the common alarm, and could not understand the placid composure which her husband seemed without an effort to maintain. After the storm had subsided, she asked an explanation of his unperturbed calmness. He drew from its scabbard his glittering sword, and holding it before her, he inquired why she was not afraid of that. She replied most naturally—"Because I know it is in the hand of one that loves me, and who would not harm me." "Thus with me," said the officer. "He that holds the winds in his fists and the sea in the hollow of his hand is my friend. The lightning is but his glittering sword; the thunder but the voice of his power. I fear them not."

The christian in such an attitude is independent of surrounding circumstances. He has learned in whatsoever state he is, therewith to be content. He knows both how to be abased and how to abound; how to be full and how to be hungry: he has learned to say with

the Psalmist—"O God, thou art my portion: whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." His happiness is a fixed quantity—independent of earthly contingencies. "Though the fig-tree should not blossom, neither shall be fruit in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation."

The sorrows of life are easily borne, for he endures them as seeing him who is invisible. The sympathy and the supporting arm of God make the burden light. The loss of some earthly good may be a trial; but it is a light one, and but for a moment. And

> "Why should the soul a drop bemoan,
> That has a fountain near."

All that he loses, or can lose, is but a drop from the ocean. Such an one is at peace with the universe. At peace with the Omnipresent and Omnipotent; the Creator and upholder of all things, his treaty of peace extends to his entire dominions. The Heavens smile peacefully upon him, and the earth reflects back the peaceful smile. He is at peace with the twinkling stars as they cast upon him their searching glance; he is at peace with the threatening clouds and the gathering storm; at peace with the thunder and the lightning; at peace with the sea and with the land; at peace with the winds and the waves. The roar of the waters has no terror for him; for God is in it. The fire, and the hail, and the tempest terrify him not. For "he maketh the winds his messengers and the flaming fire his servant; he maketh the clouds his chariot; he walketh upon the wings of the wind." The quaking of the earth makes him not afraid. Commotions among nations disturb him not; for all the tribes and nations of the earth are but insignificant parts of God's universal dominion. There may be wars, and rumors of wars, but he is at peace. God maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. For they cannot harm him. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. Because thou hast made the Lord thy refuge; even the Most High thy habitation, there shall no evil befal thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."

He who knows God, is at peace with death. For God's dominions extend over the waste domain of even the King of Terrors.

The grave is to the Christian but the hallowed entrance to eternal glories. Death is but the crysalis state between the grovelling life of earth, and the higher and more beauteous angelic life of Heaven.

He is at peace with misfortunes, and trials and afflictions; for they come not unbidden of God; and as they bring with them the seal of their divine commission, he bows with serene submission to the higher wisdom and purer love of his best and truest friend; and breathes forth with the deepest earnestness of his soul—"Not my will, but thine be done."

He is blest with the most glorious companionship. He is never alone, never unbefriended. In the desert with no mortal eye to cheer or pity, God is with him. Amid the ten thousand strangers whom he meets in the busy mart of commerce, and among whom he passes, alike unknowing and unknown, there is one still whose acquaintance he enjoys, and whose friendship and society constitute the highest good of his spirit. In the lion's den Daniel had other companionship than that of the ferocious beasts. In the fiery furnace was seen by discerning eyes another beside the three worthies, and the form of the fourth was like the Son of God. In the prison with Paul and Silas was one whom prison doors could not shut out, and whom locks, and bolts, and bars could not shut in. In the stilly hour of evening, or amid the solemn darkness of the midnight, he who is truly a friend of God is never alone. Wherever he roams, wherever he dwells; by land or by sea; this side the grave or the other, it matters not to him. Wherever he is, there is God; and where God is, there is Home and Heaven. Always safe, for God defends; always peaceful, for he knows God too well to distrust him. "The Lord is his everlasting light, and the days of his mourning are ended." I conclude with two

REMARKS.

1. How perfect an antidote for unrest of soul does the text present to us. Acquaint now thyself with God and be at peace. This is peace—not fictitious peace—but true; substantial, positive, permanent; as enduring as God its eternal source. The good that comes to us of acquaintance with God is everlasting. While God lives to bless, and the soul lives to be blest, its blessedness is sure. "This is eternal life, to know God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent." And how infatuated the man who postpones the knowledge of God to any other knowledge or any other thing. "Acquaint now thyself with God and be at peace." Seek God first. For "they that seek him early shall find him." Seek him earnestly; for it is the highest of all good. And "if thou apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find *the knowledge of God.*"

2. The great end of all God's dealings and doings is to make us acquainted with himself. He writes his name upon every cloud and upon every star; paints it upon the rainbow; utters it in the thunder, whispers it in the summer breeze; he speaks to us from the written page, and with the still small voice of the inward monitor; he comes to us with the voice of the prophet, the apostle, and the living preacher; speaks to us through his Son; speaks to us by his Spirit; comes in rebuke; comes in melting tenderness; comes in the falling shower; comes in the sunbeam; comes in the dew-drop. Every disappointment of earthly hope; every loss of earthly good; every calamity; every bereavement; every prosperity, every adversity; every dashing wave of sorrow, every gilded wave of joy; every pain of body, every burden of the heart; every ill, every sorrow, every sin, still speaks in the ear of man—"Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace; thereby good shall come to thee—*and thereby only.* Away then with that atheistic though admired couplet of Pope:—

"Know thou thyself; presume not God to scan;
The proper study of mankind is man."

Upon the heathen temple was written: γνοθι σεαυτον—know thyself. Upon the new temple is written:—"Know thyself, and know thy God, as thy soul's greatest want and truest good." Delay not to know God. That knowledge will be a living perennial fountain of life and joy to thy soul. The highest of all sciences and the most blessed is that that teaches us of God: a science that the prince and the peasant, the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the learned and the unlearned, the philosopher and the rustic, may all alike engage in studying. The text-books are the heavens above us, the earth beneath us, the universe about us, the Word before us, and the Spirit within us. *Know God, and then shalt thou know thyself; and in him and through him know all things else that it concerns thee to know.*

HYMN.

My son, know thou the Lord;
Thy father's God obey;
Seek his protecting care by night,
His guardian hand by day.

Call while he may be found;
O, seek him while he's near;
Serve him with all thy heart and mind,
And worship him with fear.

If thou wilt seek his face,
His ear will hear thy cry;
Then shalt thou find his mercy sure,
His grace forever nigh.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST.

BY REV. J. N. DANFORTH, ALEXANDRIA, VA.

"If any man have not the *spirit* of Christ, he is *none* of his."—Rom. viii. 9.

How simple this test! Here is no mystery. The mind of any Christian may apply this criterion. What was the spirit of Christ as manifested on earth?

1. A spirit of *benevolence*. This brought him from heaven. He loved men—God *so* loved the world—he *wished well* to men, desired their happiness, and was ready to make any sacrifice to promote it. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was *rich*, yet for our sakes he became *poor*; that ye through his poverty might be rich." What an example! *We* cannot *so* love, but unless we have this spirit in our measure, and according to our ability, we are none of Christ's.—Question thyself.

2. His was a spirit of *gentleness*. Not a harsh or repulsive feature disfigured that original. John, looking at him as he walked, said, "Behold the *Lamb* of God." So gentle was he. He admired the boldness of Peter, but felt a congenial sympathy with the tenderness of John. He could modestly say, "Learn of me, for I am *meek* and lowly." In him the perfection of meekness was embodied. Hast thou this spirit? Or art thou proud, contentious, severe, implacable? Learn of him, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again." Oh, yes; *consider* him, who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

3. His was a spirit of *beneficence*, that is, of *doing good*. And though the world was against him, he did immeasurable good. He who has the *spirit* of doing good, will find the means and accomplish the end. Where there is a *will*, there is a *way*. Talk not of your obscurity, and your obstacles. It is the very province of the spirit of Christ in you to take advantage of the former, and to overcome the latter. He *went about* doing good, and so must you. If Satan and his imps do all the evil they can, we must do all the good we can, or we have not so far forth the spirit of Christ. "*To do good*, and to communicate, *forget* not." We are so forgetful.

4. *Fidelity to the souls of men* eminently characterized Christ. It was *in* him, and it came *out* on every proper occasion. How faithfully he reproved the Pharisees! how plainly he dealt with his own friends. How faithfully he performed every duty, even the most unpleasant. Now, if you have not this spirit, you are

none of his. What a coward hast thou been in dealing with the faults and sins of thy fellow-men.

5. *Condescension to the weakness of humanity* was conspicuous in the man of sorrows. Who ever stooped from such a height to such a depth? Behold his intercourse with men, visiting them in their abodes, however humble; teaching the ignorant, mingling with all classes, reasoning down objections, removing difficulties, encouraging the despairing, comforting the afflicted. See him in the family at Bethany—by the side of the well of Sychar in a hot summer day—in the house of Simon, with the poor penitent at his feet—in the street with the blind—in the temple of the sick—in the cemetry of the dead; always in all *condescending*. If thou hast not this spirit—

6. Then that *spirit of forgiveness*—is it in thee, as it was in Christ? "I say unto you," I say it in contradistinction from the maxims of the world, "Love your *enemies*." Oh, how different from the doctrines of men! And in that dark and bitter hour of final agony, he prayed, "Father, forgive them." Canst thou thus pray? If not, thou art none of his. The dying Hooper said to his executioner, "God forgive thee thy sins, and do thine office, I pray thee."

7. *Submission to God in affliction.* Was ever man afflicted like him? Was ever man submissive like him? "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Again, in Gethsemane, "Not my will, but thine be done."

> With gentle resignation still,
> He yielded to his Father's will,
> In sad Gethsemane.

As there was no sorrow like his sorrow, so there was no submission like his submission. Dost thou, reader, thus yield thyself to God? How often with deep emotion have I pondered on those lines of the same sweet and natural poet:

> When storms of sorrow round us sweep,
> And scenes of anguish make us weep;
> To sad Gethsemane
> We'll look and see the Saviour there,
> And humbly bow, like him, in prayer.

8. *Earnest anxiety for sinners in connection with intense solicitude for the glory of God.* "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," he could truly say. Ah, that was a living sacrifice, constantly consuming itself. Not to do his own will did he come, but the will of him that sent him. At the end of his eventful career he could say, "I have glorified thee on the earth." He was ever anxious to glorify God in the salvation of sinners. Is this thy anxiety?

9. *Exemplary self-denial.* His whole history was an illustra-

tion of this grace. Well did it come from him, "If any man will be *my* disciple, let him deny *himself*." In what hast thou done this? Hast thou caught this spirit from Christ?

10. *Habits of secret prayer.* If the Son of God so often retired to pray, what need have we of so doing? Do you imitate Christ in this? If not, you are none of his.

11. *Perseverance to the end.* Beneath the haughty frowns of the wicked, against obstacles the most formidable, before temptations the most fascinating, amid reproaches, treason, desertion and death itself, he held on his way, resolved to finish the work given him to do: and thus when he loved his own, he loved them to the end. Illustrious model of all that is good, holy and true, be thou my pattern and my portion, infuse thy spirit into my heart, and let me live in thy life. Oh, bless me with a portion of thine own benevolence, thy matchless gentleness, thy beneficent activity, thine unflinching fidelity, unparalleled condescension, wonderful spirit of forgiveness, profound submission, anxiety for sinners, self-denial, secret communion with God, perseverance through all obstacles unto the end. I *must* be thus blessed, or I am not thine; for if any man have not the *spirit* of Christ, he is none of his.

HYMN.

Go to the dark Gethsemane,
Ye that feel the tempter's power,
Your Redeemer's conflict see,
Watch with Him one bitter hour;
Turn not from His griefs away,
Learn of Jesus Christ to pray.

Follow to the judgment-hall;
View the Lord of life arraigned;
O the wormwood and the gall;
O the pangs His soul sustained;
Shun not suffering, shame or loss;
Learn of Him to bear the cross.

Calvary's mournful mountain climb;
There, adoring at his feet,
Mark that miracle of time,
God's own sacrifice complete:
"It is finished"—hear him cry;
Learn of Jesus Christ to die.

Early hasten to the tomb,
Where they laid His breathless clay;
All is solitude and gloom,
—Who hath taken Him away?
Christ is risen; He meets our eyes;
Saviour, teach us so to rise.

—*Montgomery.*

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SERMON DCLXXXIII.

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LIFE—ITS CHANGES AND ITS LESSONS.

"And the king said, is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet."—2 SAM. ix. 3.

THE lessons of life are sometimes fearful, but always instructive to him who believes in the all pervading providence of God. Of these lessons, the chapter containing the text is very suggestive.

1. We have here a vivid illustration of the mutability of worldly greatness.

About thirty-four years before the event here recorded, Saul received his appointment, as the first king of Israel, under circumstances prophetic of a splendid and prosperous reign; the events which led to his election—his majestic personal appearance—his sacred anointing—his receiving another spirit from God, were circumstances full of promise for the future. He had a rich kingdom—a powerful army—a numerous family—and, the manifest favor of Heaven. Who, in reading this earlier portion of his life, and seeing it open with so much light and hope, would dream, that such a rising sun would soon go down amidst clouds and storms, and his name, in after times, be used only "to point a moral"—only to warn men against the indulgence of pride and presumption.

Yet, at the close of thirty-four years from this time, where is Saul, what is the condition of his family? He has forsaken the Lord, who had so signally befriended him in his early manhood; and now, tortured and maddened by an evil spirit, he has become a curse to his people, and a bitter foe to all who cross his selfish path; his heart is corroded with envy; his conscience is so burdened with guilt, and his mind is so oppressed with the gathering evils of a wasted life, that it seems to him better to die than to live; and so he cuts the thread of his own life, and goes unbidden and unprepared to the bar of God.

Where is his family, about which so lately were gathered all the luxuries and the pride of life? They were scattered at first here and there, till at length only one individual of the royal race of Saul is found, and he is a pauper and a cripple!

"Be not high minded," is the lesson which this fact reads to us; "Be not high minded, but fear." Worldly greatness is mutable, and destined to a speedy downfall, when it arrays itself against the government of God. The prosperity, which refuses to bow to the supremacy of Heaven; the elevation, which fills the heart with pride and the love of self-indulgence, soon make men top heavy, and unable to stand; and then cometh to pass the saying, that is written, "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Let the short race of Saul, in the high places of power, and its sad catastrophe teach us, that human greatness, when it comes into conflict with the plans of infinite wisdom, has no power to save itself from tumbling headlong into infamy.

But, while these sad changes are going on in respect to Saul, we have another individual presented in this chapter, whose history illustrates—

2. The efficiency of the favor and blessing of God in the way of well doing.

This individual was David, living at first in Bethlehem, the youngest of seven sons, and, for that reason, perhaps, chosen to keep his father's sheep; and, though his occupation was humble, affording but few, if any facilities as one would think for rising in the world, yet he seemed determined to do with his might what his hands found to do. There was hope in his eye, and good courage in his heart, because he had somehow learned, with the affectionate trust of a child, to lean on the paternal care of God; for, it was about this time that he wrote the Psalm, suggested doubtless by his occupation, and beginning with, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; he maketh me to lie down in green pastures—he leadeth me beside the still waters—he restoreth my soul." It was thus that he started in life, "seeking first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness," and then making it his commanding object to take lessons in the line of self improvement, and to reach the highest excellence in the lit-

tle sphere he was called to fill. Little did he think, while practising with the sling and the stone, and waking to ecstasy the living lyre, and settling his mind in the great principles of truth and righteousness, what an influence these exercises would have on the success of his after life. The touching notes of his harp often arrested the attention of multitudes, while passing the field, where he was watching his father's flock—notes which told that his heart was in the right place; and, when at length it was known, that a skillful player on that instrument was needed to drive away the spirit of melancholy that was now troubling the mind of the king, all eyes were at once turned to "the sweet singer of Israel;" and so he came to court, where not more for his skill on the harp, than for the nobleness of his character, he won for himself universal favor, insomuch that Saul made him his armor bearer. And, when afterward he heard the impious challenge of Goliath, and saw the strong men of Israel tremble at the very sight of the giant, he thought of the lion and the bear, that he had brought down, perhaps by a stone thrown from his sling, and felt, that He who had thus delivered him from the paw of the lion and the bear, would save him likewise, by the same means, from the power of the uncircumcised Philistine. You all know the result. Thus he went onward and upward, sustained by Divine favor, receiving constant help from above, because, in a right way, he sought to help himself, till at length he reached the high places of power as the anointed king of Israel. Such an upward tendency in his life, we are sure, would not have appeared, if he had not placed himself early in the line of self-improvement and the fear of the Lord. He could not thus have risen from the sheep-fold to a throne, if God had not been with him. His "favor is life, and his loving kindness is better than life."

Now as the law of prosperity in this world is the same in every age, we gather from this portion of David's history a cogent reason, why all young men should go and do likewise. The starting point of success is being faithful in that which is least. A young man, connected with an obscure family, and living in some unfrequented part of the town, may think it of little consequence what he does, or what feelings he cherishes. Supposing it to be impossible for him to rise above his present condition, he may let his mind run to waste, and permit the passion of envy to nestle in his heart. But, let him think of David giving his mind to the work of self-improvement in the sheep pasture of Bethlehem, and remember, that more eyes are upon him than he is aware of. Let him from respect to the account he must render to God for the improvement of the one talent, with which he is entrusted, make the most of his time and opportunities; let him, like David, be faithful in that which is least, and he cannot long be hid. If he is that wise son that maketh a glad father; if he aims at the highest excellence in whatever department of

labor he may be employed; if he seeks to store his mind with useful knowledge, and to show himself a man in all the relations of this and the coming life, the fact will soon begin to be whispered about, first here and then there, till, in due time, these whispers will break on his ear in the clear and impressive call of the whole community, backed by the voice of Providence, saying, "Friend, go up higher; cultivate this larger field; for to him that hath, and uses well what he hath, shall more be given."

If however, he hopes to feel the efficiency of the favor and blessing of God, he must, to the acquisitions just named, add these other two, (to wit,) long patience and a well balanced mind. Some men, after doing well for a season, become fretful and impatient, and so destroy what little capital they had acquired for the cultivation of a larger field. Others, when by patient continuance in well doing, they began to reap the appropriate reward, became intoxicated by success for the want of a well regulated mind, and thus soon fell to rise no more. What every young man should specially seek for, who is desirous to make his mark in the world, is to have his mind well settled in the truth and love of God, and in the conviction of his personal accountability. Thus armed and equipped, we do not doubt that his bark will, in due time, if he faint not, feel the prosperous breath of Heaven, as it passes over the great ocean of life, bearing him not indeed to a throne, but to the nobler position of usefulness, according to the measure of his ability. We are confident, that here lay the secret of David's prosperity, and that this secret of the Lord is with all them that fear him.

Let our young men, therefore, be of good courage, and trust in the Lord, and do good, and he will surely bring it to pass.

3. We have also, in this chapter, an instance of a truly magnanimous spirit, exhibited by David towards the house of Saul, his bitterest enemy.

An example which we shall do well to gaze at till it finds its counterpart in our own conduct.

All along before this, he had returned only good for evil, refusing on one occasion to take the life of Saul, when it was in his power, and when multitudes would have applauded him for the deed. But his magnanimity in the case before us rose far above any former precedent. For when firmly seated on the throne, and his enemies on every side subdued, he bethought himself of the house of Saul. We do not wonder that he should have been ignorant of their precise condition on account of the *full* occupation of his thoughts and time in other directions. For more than seven years he had been constantly and bitterly opposed by Ishbosheth, and his engagements afterwards were numerous. But now during his first freedom from these pressing cares, we hear him asking, "Is there yet any that is left of he house of Saul?" Why does he ask? Is it that he may put

them out of the way? That they may not disturb the succession of his own family to the throne? O no; but it is that he may "show the kindness of God to them." Now it is refreshing to see such a spirit; it is an example of magnanimity, which it will do us good to look at and ponder, till "we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Any one, even a man of the smallest capacity, can be mean, cruel, unmerciful, and revengeful; for this is natural; but it requires a large heart, triumphing over all selfish considerations, not only to forgive a powerless enemy, but to bring him in his necessities into our own houses, and to permit him to sit, as we would a friend, at our own table.

It has been well said, that to do good to those who love us, is natural—to do evil to those who do us good, is devilish; but to do good to those who do us evil, is godlike. It is imitating Him, who "causeth the sun to shine on the evil and the good, and sendeth the rain on the just and the unjust."

Now however hard we may find it to make this magnanimity our own, yet we all admire it. We acknowledge that a disposition to forgive injuries is more noble, and indicates a nobler character than to give full effect to the spirit of resentment. We love to look on the face of that fellow man, which, by its open and bland expression, reveals a purpose to live in charity with all the world, and to make all around him feel comfortable, and unapprehensive of any meditated evil on his part against them.

We love David, therefore, the more for his forgetfulness of the wrongs he had received from Saul; and for his noble purpose to show only the kindness of God instead of the retaliation, which is so natural to our fallen humanity. Let the same mind be in us, and we shall not only rise higher in the scale of moral worth ourselves, but shall add our weight to the lever, which is destined to pry up this fallen world into the sunlight and amidst the ennobling influences of christianity.

4. We have also in this chapter an example of genuine and disinterested friendship.

We mean by friendship the attachment of kindred hearts and minds; an attachment steady and abiding through all the changes that occur in our mortal life. Such a friendship never existed in greater purity and ardor than between David and Jonathan. Who can read the ode, which the former composed upon the death of the latter, without being affected by the strength and tenderness of his feelings. "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle. Oh! Jonathan! thou wast slain in thy high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."

Now that such a gush of emotion should have followed the hearing of his friend's death, while his heart was tender, and the

event was so recent, does not surprise us, although the emotion was extraordinary, both for the depth and pathos of its expression. But it *does* excite our wonder, and shows the depths of David's friendship, that after a considerable time had elapsed, during which he had become firmly seated on the throne of Israel, and of course greatly absorbed in his own concerns and those of his kingdom, he should have been thinking of the house of Saul, not with a view to work its extermination for his own greater safety, but that he might show the kindness of God to any surviving member of it. Here is proof of a friendship, far from common, that neither the lapse of time, nor great personal prosperity had been able to cool.

It often happens, from a variety of causes, that the friends of our youth are forgotten; that the attachments then formed which promised to be permanent, have now nevertheless come to be regarded as a pleasant dream, rather than as a reality, disposing us to make present inquiries and sacrifices for its continuance. New scenes have opened before us, and new connexions have been formed, bringing with them new and pressing cares, and taking the place in our thoughts and regards, which had been occupied by the friends of our younger days. Those friends too have changed. Other objects have appealed successfully to their hearts, engrossing their time and thoughts, and we seem to them like stars, which have changed their place in the horizon, or that have perhaps gone down forever!

Yet these early friendships, as we calmly and thoroughly recur to them in our thoughts, have power to move the soul in its lowest depths. We thus perhaps come to know that the man who is now an outcast from society on account of his profligacy and vice, was once our favorite playmate, jocund and generous, attracting us to him by many a noble trait of character, whose memory cannot now be recalled without touching the secret place of tears.

By some means too, the name of a suffering woman is mentioned, who has seen affliction as the wife perhaps of a spendthrift or a drunkard; and the name brings her before us, as she was in her girlhood, amiable, true, and confiding; the joy of her father, and her mother's pride, and holding a high place in our regards. What a lesson does the reminiscence of such an one read to us now! Well would it be if the thought of her should excite in our minds the purpose to find her out, that we might show the kindness of God to her stricken heart and desolate household!

But it is not often that our remembrances of the past move us in this direction. "Every man for himself," is the doctrine of selfishness—a doctrine that gains strength, as life goes on, unless we take care to cultivate tenderness of feeling. We become so absorbed in our own concerns, as to find little room and less dis-

position to give much attention to the claims of these early friendships.

We honor David, therefore, the more for making himself an exception to the general course of human practice. In the height of his prosperity, he thought of Jonathan, his early and devoted friend; and the recollection did more than merely draw out the exclamation, "Alas! my brother!" It led him also to ask, "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

Perhaps most of you have read a beautiful illustration of this spirit, which went the rounds of the papers at the time of its occurrence in one of our principal cities. The story is briefly this: A young married couple, at the time they commenced house-keeping, found themselves in want of six chairs, which they had neither money nor credit enough to obtain. A widow in the neighborhood, and in easy circumstances, and given to acts of kindness to the poor, by some means learned what was wanted, and supplied the deficiency. Time went on, and changed their relative positions; the widow became poor, and the young married couple whom she had befriended became rich: and yet for some time, and from an unknown source, all her necessities were supplied. When at length the name of her benefactor became known, and a general wonder expressed in view of such unusual liberality, he replied, that there was no cause for wonder, as he was only paying to the excellent widow the interest due on the six chairs!

Let every one go and do likewise, and much of the suffering of this suffering world would come to an end; and the chain of friendship would be kept bright and strong, binding neighborhoods and communities together in the bonds of brotherly love.

5. In the facts alluded to in this chapter, we see a remarkable interposition of Providence in behalf of the fatherless and afflicted.

Jonathan, it will be remembered, was slain before he reached the prime of his life. He left a son by the name of Mephibosheth, unable to take care of himself; for he was lame on both his feet. It was doubtless true, also, that, in the downfall of Saul's house, his property went down with him. But where, amidst all this confusion, do we find Mephibosheth, fatherless and lame, and probably without such an order of intellect as to command general respect? He was first taken up by Machir, who afterwards became a very useful friend to David—a man, little known on earth but (if I have read his character aright), honored in heaven; he took the poor boy, and showed him the kindness of a father. But as if this were not enough to illustrate the interest which God feels in behalf of the fatherless and afflicted, he also touched the heart of David, and thus this child of misfortune was introduced into the palace, and invited to eat meat during the rest of his life at the king's table.

But all this is just what we should expect in sight of such passages as the following in the word of God: "Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry."—*Ex.* xxii. 22.

God also styles himself the keeper and the father of the fatherless. Hence he says, "Leave thy fatherless children with me; I will save them alive." To oppress the fatherless, he regards as a serious crime; and to visit them in their affliction is set down as one of the proofs of pure and undefiled religion in the heart.

Now in the light of these statements we see why it is that orphan children are so much better provided for than appearances at first led us to anticipate. Several times in the course of my ministry, have I been called to attend the funeral of the only remaining parent of several children, left entirely destitute of the means of support, and have wondered in common with others, who saw their destitution, how they would be able to make headway in the world. And yet in every instance the needed friends were raised up for their support, and the orphan's tears were soon dried by the sweet voices of efficient sympathy. Yes, "a father of the fatherless, and a judge of widows, is God in his holy habitation."—*Ps.* lxviii. 5.

6. We notice also the advantage attending a pious ancestry.

There was nothing, so far as appears, either in the mind or heart of Mephibosheth to justify the attention and kindness which he received; but in Jonathan, his father, there was: and for the father's sake, a worthless, graceless son is often kindly remembered, when otherwise he would be left to perish in his own corruptions. There is a principle, underlying this subject, to which it becomes us to give earnest heed, and which is thus set down in the divine testimony. "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness upon children's children to such as keep his covenant." And this Jonathan appears to have done with heartiness and zeal—and hence the mercy of the Lord made a large provision for the wants of Mephibosheth. We are assured also that "a good man leaveth an inheritance to children's children," consisting not in the treasures of the earth, nor a name, associated with mere worldly greatness; for Saul had both these; but they passed away, leaving his children none the better for them; but it consists in an interest in the covenanted favor of God. If we believe in the reality of that everlasting covenant which is well ordered in all things, and sure, into which God enters with believers, promising to be a God to them, and to their seed after them, we shall not doubt that it is in this channel that his mercy flows in its richest forms. This channel of grace and glory was opened in the time of Abraham, who was constituted the father of all them that believe, and the fountain of influences, which

are yet to refresh all the habitations of men. "In thee and in thy seed," so the promise runs, "shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Yet, in many minds, there is a lurking scepticism in relation to this whole matter, because many a good man's son has failed to receive the renewing grace of God. Esau, it is thought, was no better for having been a child of the covenant. Eli's sons made themselves none the less vile for having had a godly father. Nor did all David's children, "the man after God's own heart," inherit his spirit and his destiny. And many ask, therefore, what advantage, in respect to gaining the favor of God, hath the Jew over the Greek? What superior blessing is in store for the child of a pious father, that may not also reach the descendant of the vilest man?

Now I do not wonder at these and similar questions, and yet my confidence in the fact, that blessings descend to children's children on account of the ancestor's piety and prayers, remains unshaken. I can account for many failures in this regard, with which I am acquainted, without at all impeaching the faithfulness of God to his covenant. "Eli's sons made themselves vile because he restrained them not. The parent may be pious, and yet fail to train his child in the way he should go. The blessings of the covenant are promised only to such as faithfully regard its provisions. Doing this, they always find it the channel through which divine goodness flows in all its fullness to the souls of children's children. All this I see clearly, and my impressions of its truth are deepening from year to year. I am sure that Mephibosheth would not have been cared for as he was, if his father had been a son of Belial. I am confident that, as time goes on, and the divine plans approach their consummation, all will have deeper convictions on this subject than are now commonly entertained, because then God's ancient covenant people will stand before the world in a new and attractive light. It will be seen, that in the ages gone by, they were not forgotten; that they were still beloved, for their great father's sake.

And we observe even now, that those who study this subject most deeply, and most devoutly watch the developments of God's providence in relation to the seed of the righteous, are gaining convictions of the value of this relationship of the most impressive character. Yes, the good man does indeed leave an inheritance to his children's children. When he is dead, his influence lives—his prayers are a legacy of more value than all the gems of every earthly mine—than all the pearls in every ocean cave.

And hence our conclusion should be, that the best thing we can do for our dear children is, first of all, cordially to join ourselves to the Lord in a new and everlasting covenant, and then, with an earnest faith in the Mediator, to have the seal of this covenant applied to them. Let this be done with a right spirit,

and with a life influenced by its responsibilities, then we may hope that "our sons will be as plants grown up in their youth, and that our daughters will be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."

I have now completed the trains of thought most obviously suggested by the reading of this chapter. These thoughts, though apparently diverse in their bearings from each other, are yet in their combination in real life essential to *completeness* of character. We are never safe; nor can we reach and hold the highest earthly prosperity, till we rejoice most of all in the perfect and all-pervading government of God. This, Saul failing to do, soon lost his balance of mind, and fell to rise no more; but in the divine government, David, from his early youth to old age, ever took a supremely complacent interest; and under its influence, he not only went safely up to a throne, but formed a character of singular excellence; magnanimous in forgiving injuries; steadfast and self-sacrificing in his friendships; patriotic as a citizen, and a man after God's own heart.

Under the nurture of the same principles, may it be our purpose, my hearers, to live, and form our characters for the final judgment. Then shall we be considerate, humble, prayerful, and safe. Our pathway through life will be made luminous and attractive by many a deed of self-denial, adding to the amount of human bliss, and illustrating the excellence of the gospel of the grace of God: and our setting sun will shine out brightly at the last, prophetic of the glorious day that is to follow—the day of complete emancipation from the law of sin and death, and of endless life, and health, and beauty to the soul.

SERMON DCLXXXIV.

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FRETTING: ITS NATURE, ITS CAUSES, ITS EVILS, AND ITS CURE.

"Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil."—Ps. xxxvii. 8.

The idea is, that we shall certainly do evil if we fret;—evil to ourselves, as thus an originally bad temper is made worse—and evil to others, as the certain effect is to produce in them uneasiness and distrust. Fretting puts a man upon a very unquiet sea; or rather it is the wind, which disturbs the great ocean of

life, rendering its navigation difficult, and, by the hurry and confusion it creates, making the condition of our fellow-passengers exceedingly uncomfortable.

I think no apology is due for treating of a topic so unusual; for it relates to an evil of which but few, if any, are entirely free —which, in its ordinary exhibitions, greatly disturbs the happy intercourse of society, and is no doubt offensive to God. I think therefore you will all agree with me in saying, that it is a fit subject for the pulpit; and that if it be set forth in its true light and with a proper spirit, it can hardly fail to awaken such consideration in the premises as will lead us to greater self-improvement.

Besides, we are to remember, that religion has the promise of the life that now is; that it concerns itself with the various tempers of the mind, and all the exhibitions of conduct in every relation of life, and all for the purpose of exterminating what is wrong in the heart, and of fostering whatsoever things are just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report in the whole catalogue of the virtues.

Satisfied then that we are not travelling out of the record in the train of thought we propose to pursue, let us proceed to consider, as well as we can, THE NATURE, THE CAUSES, THE EVILS, and THE CURE *of Fretting*.

I. *The Nature.*

Fretting is a word which seems to convey a good deal of its sense by its sound. The very word grates harshly on the ear, giving the impression of a painful jar somewhere—of a rubbing and friction, which wear out and destroy the parts which come in contact, instead of polishing and fitting them to do better service.

But whether the sound of the word gives us any portion of its sense or not, it is certain that we all have gained a distinct conception of its meaning from that clearest of all interpreters—our own experience. We all probably know what it is to fret better than any one can tell us, and better than the best definition of it which we ourselves can frame. That perturbation of mind, caused by the conflict of anger, or jealousy, or envy, or ambition, with the calm voice of reason and conscience, and the general good, we have all doubtless not unfrequently felt. Out of this state of mind grows that crabbed and bitter fruit which bears the appropriate name of fretfulness. It is that ill-humor of the mind which, when it becomes a habit, constitutes the peevish man—one who is out of sorts with everything and everybody, to whose jaundiced eye the world appears to be hung all round with sackcloth, and to be in every part sadly and irretrievably out of joint.

The human mind, like a musical instrument, is exceedingly apt, in this disordered world, to get out of tune: then, however deli-

cately it be touched, instead of discoursing sweet music, it gives out only discordant notes—painful to the ear, and prophetic of something yet worse to come. In this state of mind the man is out of harmony with God, and with the noble design of his creation. And he feels that dying in such a frame, he can anticipate, as the portion of his soul, only the blackness of darkness forever. The workings of this temper are the scream of an evil spirit, calling to its aid other spirits worse than itself to enter into the man's heart and dwell there, making his last state worse than the first.

But I am losing sight of the nature of fretfulness in the contemplation of its consequences. It is then enough to say of it, that it is a state of feeling marked either by the hurry and restlessness of discontent with the allotments of Providence, or by the sullenness of disappointed ambition, or the meanness of excited envy.

But we are anticipating the next topic of which we are to speak, i. e.,

II. The causes *of fretfulness.*

From the command, "Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil," we gather that the efficient cause of fretting is in ourselves; and that if any one is possessed with this devil, he lets the evil spirit in, and gives him his bed and board. True, there are numerous causes from without, which, acting upon, or rather deranging the machinery of the inner man, work out, as the result, a peevish, ill-natured spirit: the state of the weather, the splenetic remark of a neighbor, the thwarting or embarrassment of some favorite plan acting in connection with a disordered stomach and a sensitive nervous system, often throw a man off from his balance, and beget the language and spirit of censoriousness.

Such causes, in so far as they are physical, men are apt to regard as uncontrollable, leaving them without sin, even though they should fret intolerably. But if a man cannot control his nerves, he is nevertheless bound to keep them from giving fresh activity to the plague of his heart. If he cannot avoid shivering when exposed to the cold sleet of November, or to the more unbearable sleet of a frosty friend, he has no right therefore to feel that he does well to be angry. If the gourd which had shielded him from the sun's heat during the day should perish, he is not permitted to fret, if the next morning he finds himself exposed to the full action of the sun. He may not in any circumstance, however trying, follow the suggestions of Job's wife, and curse God and yield to despondency.

But when a man frets because things do not go to his mind, he is responsible for the consequences; he sins because, whether the causes producing this result be physical or moral, they would not upset his self-control if he were accustomed to keep himself, as he is bound to do, in the fear of God all the day long, and was pervaded with the meekness and gentleness of

Christ. If in any circumstance a man might fret with impunity—if ever causes leading to this result might be supposed to carry with them no sin if yielded to—these were the circumstances and these the causes which brought out all their strength to induce Job to sin with his lips, to fret and rage to the utmost. And yet amidst them all, he sinned not, neither charged he God foolishly. In patience he possessed his soul, till this fearful storm had spent its fury, and his character stood vindicated in the sight of unreflecting men and malignant devils.

Pain, whether in the body or the mind, is no doubt a cause of fretfulness; and so also the neglect of others—the uncharitable remark—the sly inuendo—a crossing the track of selfish desire—and the prosperity of the wicked, are all causes, exciting to impatience, to ill-humor, or peevishness; but we do wrong in every instance of yielding to them; we sin if we let any influences, from within or without, stir up in any degree the bitterness of a selfish heart, because all these influences are designed to discipline our feelings, and to strengthen our power of self-control. Wrong *they* may be who set these causes in motion, but this cannot justify us in doing wrong ourselves.

I have here purposely joined the causes producing ill-humor with our responsibility for their subjection to reason and conscience, because so many, in the habit of giving way to an evil temper, are inclined to excuse themselves on the ground, that these peevish humors proceed from a constitutional temperament. But as I nowhere find the Scriptures endorsing this idea, but on the contrary condemning it, making it the duty of all to fill their souls with the even serenity of faith and hope in God, so I feel bound to say, that God will hold the fretful man responsible for all the evils he inflicts by his petulance on himself, on his family, and on the community.

III. But what are these *Evils?* This brings us to our third point of observation.

These evils are two-fold—as they relate to the fretter himself, and as they affect his associates.

A peevish habit affects injuriously the man who indulges it. It keeps a constant shadow on his heart, while it evokes many a tempest in the soul, which drowns the still small voice of the Spirit. Who can appreciate the quiet joys of home, or receive gladness into his heart from the reflected light of his neighbor's countenance, or come into the sunlight of God's favor, while ill-humor and fretfulness are nestling in his heart, brooding on, and destined soon to hatch from the nest-eggs worse imps of darkness than now torture his spirit?

Many a man, filled with deep sympathy for some one form of suffering humanity, has entered nobly on the work of its extermination. But lacking the virtue of long patience, and kind but untiring perseverance, he at length permitted the evil spirit, of

which we are speaking, to enter and sour his mind; then he soon lost his balance, and came out in opposition to the great remedy which infinite goodness has provided for all the evils of sin. And now he is shorn of his strength to do good by the baleful spirit which governs his conduct.

Few men, however, have ever tasted the evils of this spirit in all their fullness. Under the good government of God, much as men pervert the way of truth, streams of gladness will now and then, almost in spite of themselves, enter into the muddy, slimy waters of misanthropy. Yet if the fretful humor could thoroughly permeate the soul, it would keep it in a state of perpetual gloom, forbidding the entrance of any and every refreshing influence. Let us thank God that the beneficent arrangements of his providence are such that only a few of our race are able to shut themselves up in the dungeons of their own discontent.

Still it is to be regretted that any man will consent to wear a sour face even for an hour in this beautiful world, and amidst the countless mercies which are continued to us in spite of our apostasy from God. Sad he may, and ought to be, on account of his sins; let him weep alone; but then, after repentance has done its perfect work, and faith has applied to the soul the remedial agencies of the cross, he is authorized to be always joyful in the Lord, and joyful even in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart. He does himself a serious wrong therefore if he permit the formation of a fretful habit. He spoils his own happiness, and destroys in great measure his power to do good.

He does wrong also to his *family*. The bitter but hasty word uttered in the morning, may make his household sad and disheartened all the day long. Such a wife, too, as Job had, would add intensity to the weary hours of sickness which might be appointed to her husband. "A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike." And the constant dropping will at length wear away even the granite rock.

And then as a fretful man goes into *society*, he usually carries a dark cloud with him, as if to shut out every ray of sunlight. His disheartening remarks often kill the spirit of enterprise which had begun to show itself in others. His frosty word nips the opening bud, which, had there been sunshine instead, would in its maturity have yielded the richest fruit. In whatever light then we contemplate the fretful man in his relations to others, we see him often sending out an influence as blighting to hope as the consumption to the vitality of the body. These statements are sufficient to satisfy us that the evils attending the manifestations of a fretful temper are manifold and great.

IV. But it is time to notice, as we proposed, *the Cure of* this evil temper.

And here we say,

(1.) That "to know thyself diseased is half thy cure."

Let any one be made fully aware what a poisonous matter this habit of fault-finding is; how it cuts a man off from the sympathy of others; how it makes him "like the heath in the desert, that knoweth not when good cometh;" and "like the pelican in the wilderness," solitary and moody, while the woods are ringing with notes of gladness from the well-feeling birds; and how, if it does not shut the kingdom of God against him, makes him at least a miserable Christian, I say, let a man realize all this, and if there be a cure, he will not rest till he has found and applied it. The only reason why we permit diseases of any kind to carry on their work uncounteracted, is, that we know not their nature, nor the perils to which they expose us. "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Let the diseased know their condition in time, and there is hope that they will be saved, because they will call for the requisite aid.

But what is the remedy?

(2.) It is, I answer, the balm in Gilead; this sin is to be cured like every other, by application to the atonement of Christ, and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit.

Let the same mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus, and you will fret no more; you will bless them that curse you, and live and die in charity with all men.

Yet let no one think that this evil habit will give way by his merely thinking of the cross of Christ. There is to be superadded many a personal effort to subdue this perverse temper, and to fill it with the gentleness of Christ. He must put his own shoulder to the wheel, and wrestle hard with every temptation to speak harshly or unadvisedly with his lips, while he lifts up his prayer to the hills, whence cometh his help. Doing this with earnestness and perseverance, he will sooner or later find the balance-wheel of his soul in working order, and the energies of his being moving in harmony with the general good.

I arrest the subject here for the sake of a few remarks which clearly belong to it.

1. We have then before us a very feasible, as well as a greatly desirable plan for personal and relative improvement.

We talk much about the matter of reforms; nor should any one be ashamed of belonging to the school of progress. But we may, from various causes, fail to take the evils around us by the horns. The first step obviously is to reform ourselves. In order to see clearly the mote in thy brother's eye, you must first cast out the beam that is in thine own eye; then will you not only *see* clearly, but you will also bring to the work a steady hand and an attractive manner. The plan here suggested for self-improvement is *feasible*. Plans for the benefit of others you may find it hard to execute, because those others may not wish to be bene-

fitted in the way you desire. But if you concur in the matter of *self-improvement*, you will have things all in your own way. There will be none to oppose not only, but all will rejoice to see you better natured, exhibiting the lamb rather than the tiger.

And then not only is this the *feasible*, but it is *essential* to success in the matter of wider reforms. It is to little purpose that the habitual drunkard declaims against the sin of drunkenness in others. Let every man in the church put his own spirit right, subjecting it to the law of Christ, and a light will speedily go forth from his example, which will make the world ashamed of its darkness. Indeed this is the plan of the great Reformer himself. "Let your light," said he, "so shine that men may see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven."

Let the man, who is generally known to be impatient of contradiction and fretful under reverses, become meek and gentle under provocation, and he will soon be looked up to as one that has gained a great victory. "He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city." But can a man be known as having made this conquest without soon becoming a man of strength in the community? It will do for him to speak on the subject of reforms, and all ears will be opened to his argument, because he has reformed himself. We have here then a feasible and a very desirable plan for personal and relative improvement.

I observe,

2. We cannot in any way so forcibly illustrate the reality and power of Christianity as by the exhibition of its fruits in our improved tempers.

Yet this demonstration is to be made out before men will believe in the reformatory power of the gospel. They may admit the beauty and grandeur of the theory, but until it is realized in practice, it will fail to touch the sensibilities of conscience, or to encourage effort to break the bond of iniquity. Christianity therefore will not be the power of God unto salvation in this infidel world, till the radically improved tempers of its professed friends fully appear in the ordinary intercourse of society. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples," said the great Master, "if ye have love one to another." A demonstration which of course cannot be made by those who are under the dominion of a fretful temper.

3. We see why so many in the church are mere cyphers in the work of favorably affecting other minds.

They may speak eloquently, and pray with apparent fervor, and be really persons of great mental power, and yet this constitutional devil may be so strong in them that their eloquent pleadings shall be neutralized by the just retort, "Physician, heal thyself." They are so often peevish and fretful as to have gained this unenviable and injurious distinction in the general judgment. The young are afraid to come to them for guidance, lest

they be repelled by the knitted brow and the spiteful tongue. Their counsel is seldom sought by their superiors or equals, because they are known to be so much under the spirit of gloomy forebodings, as to be unfit to give reliable advice. And their religion too partakes so much of melancholic, as often to render the whole gospel repulsive to unreflecting minds. And so it comes to pass, that, though strong in the matter of native endowments, they are nevertheless weakness itself in respect to the exertion of a healthy reformatory influence, by reason of this sin that still dwelleth unbroken within them.

Let us hope and pray that God will bless this imperfect exhibition of *the nature, causes, evils, and cure of fretfulness;* that we shall all ponder the matter, and let it lie in our minds as what is deserving immediate and earnest attention; and that henceforth we will show ourselves "blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom we shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life."

SERMON DCLXXXV.

BY REV. T. S. CLARKE,

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STUDY TO BE QUIET, &c.

"And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business."—1 THESS. iv. 11.

THIS text may strike some as impertinent. Designed originally to correct the idleness and consequent intermeddling of the Thessalonians, it may seem at first view to have no pertinency to a remarkably busy and industrious people. But perhaps, as we examine more narrowly the spirit of the text, it will be found to bear on other evils besides idleness. Whatever puts us out of our proper place, makes us more or less unquiet, and therefore to that extent disturbers of the public peace. We are turning the thoughts of others from their appropriate work. And therefore we need to study to be quiet, and to do our own business, so that others without interruption can do theirs.

To be quiet, in the sense of the text, does not mean that we are to be inactive and to do nothing. That is an impossibility; for though the mind and body should be idle, they will, they must, be doing something. Thoughts of some kind will be in

the mind, for a thoughtless mind is as great an absurdity as hot ice. And as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. What the text requires is, that our activity shall not interrupt the proper activity of others. We never speak of quiet ice, nor do we describe a pool of water standing still in its own slime. That which is lifeless, and especially that which is useless, is unworthy to be called quiet. But when a stream of water is running in its proper channel, and lining its banks with verdure and beauty, we naturally ask others to see "How quietly it is performing its office." Yet even from that stream we withdraw this epithet when it breaks over its banks, carrying desolation in its course. We can no longer call it a quiet stream. It is out of its proper place, and mischief is the result. So that quietness is consistent with motion, but inconsistent with commotion. Order is heaven's first law. So long therefore as order is maintained in the line of personal and relative duty, men are quiet in the sight of God, though manifesting a burning activity. Indeed, in these lines of thought and effort we are required to "do with our might what our hands find to do." It is only when activity, like a swollen stream, overleaps its proper channel, that the words of the text apply to us. Then it is high time that we study to be quiet.

Yet even in the line of duty we may make so much haste as to leave many things imperfectly done. Too impatient to reap the fruits of our toil, we may sow the seed before the ground is properly prepared, and so reap but a slim harvest. The student who is too eager to reach his professional life, may come to it only to find disappointment, because he lacks the mental furniture, with which alone it can be magnified. So that in the path of duty even we need to be quiet, in order to do all things well. We must not, like Ahimaaz, run, till we know what we are to run for.

Quietness then denotes a disposition to keep within the limits of our duty, though within those limits we are to work with all our might—diligent in business and fervent in spirit. The tongue which utters a word in season, and with an eloquence proportionate to the interests at stake, is quiet as the stream that keeps within its banks. It was made to give the most effective utterance to useful thoughts—to define and to defend the great principles of truth and righteousness, as well as for all the purposes of domestic life. Thus employed, however earnestly, the tongue is *quiet.*

But when it is used for the purposes of deceit and profaneness —when by tattling and evil speaking it causes heartburnings and alienations—the call of Heaven to us is to stop and study to be quiet. That little member has become unruly—it is setting on fire the course of nature and *it* is set on fire of hell.

So in going from house to house with a view to comfort the

afflicted, or to strengthen the bonds of good neighborhood, or to turn attention to the claims of eternity on our thoughts, we are not invading the quietness which the text enjoins. For the Saviour himself went about doing good, and that too in a way so quiet that he did not strive, nor cry, nor lift up his voice in the streets to the injury of others in their proper avocations. But when we go abroad, either to tell or to hear some new thing in the spirit of the ancient Athenians, or to meddle with that which is none of our business, and which can better be done without than with our interference, it is the mark of an unquiet mind, needing for its health the application of the text, "And that ye study to be quiet." That is to say, quietness cannot reign in our thoughts and activities, unless we *study* for it. It is the fruit of design, and a wisely arranged plan of life in the light of truth and the general good. As to speak before we think is the sign of a distempered mind, leading to a mischievous activity, so to think before we speak—to think as one that must give account of his uttered thoughts, is the mark of inward quietness. In such quietness and confidence is our strength. This state of mind, however, is never a hap-hazard affair. It cannot exist while a turbulent selfishness reigns in the soul. We must plan for it; study for it; pray for it; and esteem its possession better than gold. A controlling sense of personal responsibility for this purpose must be felt, so that the way to gain self-control shall be sought after and studied for in the light of God's testimonies, with more eagerness and steadiness than the sick long for the morning.

Now there are many Christians who act from impulse and whim; and no thanks to them if sometimes their course result in good; for the good was not the fruit of an intelligent plan; if in evil, as is most frequent, they must bear the blame, as they had no right to act inconsiderately. Prompted by this spirit, measures are adopted without considering their fitness to compass the end proposed. Strong meat is given when milk would be better; because a certain measure succeeded well once, they are sure it will again, however difficult may be the circumstances or the preparations. Thus, like Jehu, they drive furiously on, putting their own and the interests of others in peril.

"And that ye study to be quiet, and *to do your own business.*"

There is a way of doing our own business, which, instead of hindering, will promote the business of others; for this attention to our own affairs is not to be understood as in conflict with this other inspired direction: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." How much, and in what respects, we may look on the things of others, and still be doing our own business, we cannot mistake, if we walk in the light of the golden rule, which requires us to do to others as we desire to have them do to us. If I would not have my neigh-

bor sell strong drink to my child, because he has a taste for it, so neither may I sell to his child, having a similar appetite. If I am pained when my faults and failings are spoken of censoriously, so never may I interfere with my neighbor's in the same spirit. If I would not be a slave myself, so I must in no way help to keep another in slavery. Am I not then doing my own business when I give aid to the poor fugitive from the house of bondage; or by force of law break up the traffic in strong drink as a beverage; or turn the attention of others to "the vast concerns of an immortal scene." No man has any right to live unto himself. It is a part of his own business to turn himself, and all others within the reach of his influence, into the strait and narrow way that leadeth unto life. If it seem to him the most doleful complaint that mortal can make—"No man careth for my soul," then it is his business that no one shall ever have reason to make that complaint personal to himself.

Walking thus in the light of the golden rule, and heartily receiving the gospel in the fullness of its principles, we shall have little difficulty in understanding how much is involved in the comprehensive command "to do our own business." I have no fear that individuals, possessing the spirit of Harlan Page, will either give me improper advice, or be angry with me, if I do not see fit to follow it; nor that they will be busy-bodies in what does not concern them; nor that their tongues will feel the abiding force of any law, in conflict with that of Christian kindness.

The text, thus explained, seems to me to justify the following

CONCLUSIONS.

1. Christianity expects all, who walk in her light, to walk by the rule of wisdom and love.

And as this rule is more frequently violated by the tongue than in any other way, so to this member, and to the causes that set it in motion, Christianity directs special attention. It was mainly on account of evils, arising from this source, in the church at Thessolonica, that Paul was moved to give the earnest direction found in the text. There were professed Christians there at that time, who, because they were idle, became great talkers. Observing the conduct of others more than their own, they seem to have got improperly excited. And all this arose from an impression that the second advent of Christ was at hand, and hence, in expectation that the world would soon come to an end, they seem to have left off work and gone to talking.

There was, less than a hundred years ago, a day of remarkable gloom and darkness, still known as "the dark day"—a day when the light of the sun was slowly extinguished as if by an eclipse. The legislature of Connecticut was at that time in session; and as its members saw this unexpected and unaccountable darkness coming on, they shared in the general awe and

terror. It was supposed by many that the last day—the day of judgment—had come. Some one, in the consternation of the hour, moved an adjournment. Then there arose an old Puritan legislator, Davenport of Stamford, and said, that "if the last day had come, *he* desired to be found in his place, and doing his duty;" and therefore moved that candles be brought in, so that the house could proceed with its duty. There was quietness in that man's mind; the quietness of heavenly wisdom, and of intelligent obedience to present duty.

And if you desire to know what, in the view of Paul, is the course of thought and effort, which will preserve us amidst the snares of life, you have it in the following words, found in the same epistle with the text (1 Thess. v. 14–22):

"Tell me, can a life, moulded by the spirit of these passages, be otherwise than useful and noble?"

2. This brings us to another conclusion, clearly authorized by the text, viz: That the habit of industry, in some lawful calling, is, next to the fear of God, the best safeguard against the inroads of evil, both in respect to individuals and communities.

An idle man is a dangerous man, because the nervous excitement, which, in an industrious man is thrown off in regular labor, leaving the system in a healthy quietness, in an idle man, stimulates in the line of greater self-indulgence. It is like the accumulation of steam without a safety-valve. And hence all who pursue a regular employment on christian principles, are safe and useful members of society, while the idle, like undrained marshes, will work only to its injury. Let the mind and heart and hands be fully and rightly employed, and individuals will have no time to act the part of busy-bodies in other men's matters, or attend to those that have; nor can they stop to engage in vain speculations. That the Lord Jesus Christ will come again to be admired in all them that believe, is a fact which the devout Christian receives with all thankfulness; but instead of wasting his time in settling the day or the manner, about which the Sacred Scriptures give us no certain light, he is rather impelled by it to do up the work of life, and to do it well, being assured of the blessedness of that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. But this was not the course of some of the Christians at Thessalonica, till Paul corrected their mistake, and gave them better views. And who are the men that go into the spiritualism of the present day? Without any personal knowledge of them, I venture to say, that in a very serious sense at least, they are idle; for the mind may be busy in vain imaginations; and though the pen be active in putting those airy nothings into seemingly substantial forms, yet it is employment that no more satisfies the cravings of an healthy mind than syllabub can satisfy the hunger of a laboring man. And so the activity itself has much the effect of idleness in giving greater energy to the corruption of the heart.

It is, therefore, a good rule, given by the apostle, that "if a man will not *work*, neither shall he eat." There is something in a proper devotion to a lawful calling, which gives the spirit of order to all the workings of the mind, and to all the exhibitions of the life.

3. Another conclusion, justified by the text, is, that a proper development of Christian character cannot be made without studying for it.

Till a true plan is devised for the conduct of the Christian life, no one of course can be rooted and grounded in the truth. Till this is done, all are liable to be blown about by every wind of doctrine. The tongue will speak as whim, or caprice, or resentment shall happen to have the ascendency. We must *study* to be quiet before we can be so on reliable grounds.

This conviction will be deepened within us when we come to consider how many are living an aimless life; how few are improving in spirit and manner, as the result of a well-defined plan for the purpose; how few feel any responsibility to be better at night than they were in the morning; how many practically say, "Our tongues are our own: who shall lord it over us?" And so it comes to pass, that multitudes are nothing better, but rather growing worse from one year to another, notwithstanding all the appliances of the gospel. There is no proper rule to regulate the Christian life. He who once thought much of a weekly social devotional exercise, did not regard a steady attendance as an indispensable nourisher of his spiritual life, but because at the time his feelings were in harmony with it. The plan was not the result of study, or of due consideration of what was needful to keep up the flame of devotion. For since then he has been drifting off—there is no anchor to his soul, that holds it—no fixed principles that regulate his Christian responsibilities—and he continues to float, as prejudice or caprice shall direct. What a world of meaning there is in this brief statement of Paul respecting a once promising professor of religion in his day: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." Christianity had no strong root in his heart, because he had not well studied himself and his wants. The love of the world was there and drew him away just as soon as the pressure of a recent religious interest was withdrawn.

With these facts before us, may we not say, that Christians will never attain to that quietness and confidence which is their strength, unless they study for it.

4. We may fairly conclude, also, that the business of the whole world will be well and truly done, when every man well and truly does his own business, and not till then.

The world will not do its duty by the mere declamation of a few reformers. But let each man, woman, and child become quiet, as the result of a thorough study and practice of family

duty, and soon the light of a glorious reformation will go through all the earth, and its words to the end of the world. Let the woman of Samaria repent, and in view of the wonder, not a few in the same city will repent also. Public changes in sentiment and feeling depend on the individual. Men never repent in the mass, but separately and alone. Let each individual, therefore, light his candle and put it on the candlestick, then, and not till then, will all the dwellings of the earth be full of light.

WEAKNESS AND STRENGTH.

"By whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small."—Amos vii. 2.

As uttered by the prophet, this may be regarded as the language of complaint, of sorrow, of despondency; and yet also of inquiry, of hope, and of prayer.

Jacob symbolizes the church; and there may be in the church certain elements of weakness. A church may be weak because its numbers are few, poor, and scattered, and without much worldly influence; but there are other elements of weakness, which render the most numerous and wealthy and compact church weak indeed. One of these is inactivity, an inactive church must be weak. As exercise is essential to health, so activity in the cause of Christ is essential to spiritual health and growth; and the church that would be strong must be active. You must work if you would grow!

Another element of weakness is worldliness; and the inactive church is sure to be worldly. And then follows illiberality. When nothing is done, little is given. Then prayer is restrained; the closet is forsaken; the family altar is deserted; and the social circle of prayer is not frequented. And how weak must be that church which is worldly, illiberal, and prayerless!

The church may be weakened too, by the neglect of discipline. Thus the standard of piety becomes low, and there is but little difference between the church and the world. In view of these things we may ask, "By whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small." And we may use these words as expressive of complaint, of sorrow, of despondency; and yet too of inquiry, of hope, and of prayer, as did Amos.

And the prayer is for strength, that Jacob may arise and be strong. And strength does not consist wholly in numbers, nor wealth, nor influence; may be few, and poor, and scattered, and yet be strong. The elements of strength are these: Union—a united people are strong, for union is strength; love—love to Christ, to each other, to the souls of men—a loving people are

strong; faith—confidence in God as the founder and Saviour of Zion; a faithful, confiding people are strong; zeal—a zealous people are strong; activity, effort—an active, laborious people are strong; liberality—a giving people are strong; prayer—a prayerful people are strong, for prayer prevails with God; it moves the hand that moves the world.

But by whom shall Jacob arise and become strong? By God only; and yet he will use the church's instrumentality in this work. He may raise up some special leader for the work; but usually he employs her present officers and members. He arouses them to a sense of their personal responsibilities and duties. He leads every one to feel that there is work for him to do, and he constrains each one to do his own proper work; to repent of his deadness and worldliness, and return unto God. And then he pours out a spirit of grace and of supplication, and leads to earnestness and importunity in prayer. Then he blesses his word and ordinances; and he answers prayer; revives his work; souls are converted; and Zion arises and puts on strength, she arises and shines, because the glory of Christ rises upon her. Thus it is that Jacob, though small, is made strong; and he shall thus wax stronger and stronger.

Now let us remember that every one who is connected with the church also adds either to its weakness or its strength. If we are inactive, worldly, illiberal, prayerless, then we take just so much from the strength of the church, and add just so much to its weakness. Alas, were all like us, how small and weak must Jacob be! But if we abound in love, and faith, and zeal, and effort, and liberality, and prayer, and also keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace, then we add to the strength of the church. O how strong and vigorous would Zion be, did all possess and manifest this spirit! O let us so live that the church shall be stronger, and better, and purer for our connection with it. And let us never despair. Jacob shall arise! And with God's help, whatever is needful to be done can be done. Though numbers may be few, and wealth not abundant, yet what ought to be done can be done! Where there is a will, there is a way! —*New York Observer.*

W. J. M.

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SERMON DCLXXXVI.

BY REV. W. A. SCOTT, D.D.,

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GOD'S LOVE IN CHRIST'S MISSION.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.

"That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

"He that believeth in him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

"But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God."—JOHN iii. 14–21.

THESE verses, my fellow-citizens, are golden sentences. They are of more value than all the wise sayings of the ancients. In our sorrow-smitten and worrying world they are the unfailing fountains of peace and joy. They are the utterances of Him who came "to seek and save that which was lost;" who said "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The speaker is the Lord Jesus Christ. His

auditor was a Hebrew ruler, who was looking for a Messiah who should be a great temporal prince—not for a Saviour; looking not for a personal salvation from guilt, but for a national deliverance from the Roman yoke. Hearing of the miracles of Jesus, and being no doubt of a candid and inquiring mind, Nicodemus came to him to have some private conversation with him respecting the Kingdom of God. He was looking for the Messiah, not from Nazareth, but from Bethlehem; not in the person of an obscure Galilean stranger, but in an acknowledged descendant of the ancient royal house of David. And though the Nazarene did not fulfill his expectations of a Messiah, he probably thought he could give some information concerning him; for both he and John had preached that the kingdom of God was at hand. His opening address was ingenious and complimentary, but our Lord, instead of being flattered by it, or even permitting him to unfold the purpose of his visit, addressed him with astonishing emphasis on the subject of the new birth, and of a personal interest in religion. These things ought not to have been new to Nicodemus, as he was a teacher in Israel and a member of the Sanhedrim. He was, however, amazed at them, and at our Lord's simple earnestness. Hence Jesus repeated his statement and amplified it, by unfolding the gracious economy of the gospel, of the true nature of the Kingdom which the Father had sent him into the world to establish.

I. Observe the designation that is here given of the Messiah. He is the only begotten Son of God, and He is the Son of Man; and He is sent by the Father. The Redeemer of sinners is "the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was and continues to be, God and Man, in two distinct realities and one person forever." The designation in the text is an obvious reference to the Second Psalm, which is a prophecy of the Messiah. The terms are used figuratively, and by way of condescension to human understandings. The term "son" ordinarily suggests the idea of derivation of being, posterity, inferiority, mutual affection, and yet identity of nature. But the term Son as applied to the Messiah, signifies that He executes the office of a son in obeying his Father's will. And as a father loves his son—especially an only son—so is Christ, the Messiah, the object of the Supreme love of God the Father. The main idea of the passage certainly is the sovereign, amazing love of God to the world, as shown in the gift of His Son to be the Saviour of sinners. Christ the Messiah is also called the Son of Man. This appellation is employed by our Lord more frequently than any other, in speaking of himself, whether in public or in private, in the midst of his friends or his enemies. "Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul; being conceived by the power

of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin." "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt with us"—"God was manifest in the flesh." Christ was truly man, having a true body, spirit, and soul like our own, except that he was free from all sin. The phrase "Son of Man" is a well-known Hebraism for man. We have an instance of this in the fourth verse of Ps. viii.: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him." And the parallel and equivalent line is—"and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" The appellation "the Son of Man" marks at once the Messiah as truly a man, and at the same time, as distinguished from all other men. He is so distinguished in a variety of ways—as the Son of Man. He is the perfect, the normal man—the representative man—the second Adam—the Lord from heaven—the God-man mediator—God manifest in the flesh, and the predicted man like unto Moses—the Messiah of the Old Testament prophecy. And he is sent of the Father. "God sent His Son"—"He gave His only Son." God did not leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery, whereunto our first parents fell by transgression; but out of His mere good pleasure, by the gift of His Son, He has brought all who truly believe in Him into an estate of salvation. In the great economy of human redemption, the Father sustains the majesty of Divinity. He is the fountain of authority—the source of judgment and of mercy. He is just, and yet the justifier of them that believe in His Son, the great Redeemer. While the Son and the Father are essentially one, in the economy of grace, they sustain two offices, and the Father is greater than the Son. The Father invests the Son with the character of Mediator, and sends him forth on his mission, and promises him his reward. When, therefore, the Father is said to have *sent* the Son, the meaning is, that Jesus was divinely authorized and commissioned to act as the Saviour of the world; to *do and suffer* all that was necessary for the attainment of the salvation of man, in accordance with the perfections of the Divine character and the principles of the Divine government.

II. The origin of the economy of Divine mercy is here declared to be the love of God. It is an error of very serious magnitude to represent God as a being of *resentments* so fierce that nothing could mitigate them but the tears and prayers, the blood and death of His only Son. This is the view of the Divine character we are frequently charged with holding. But this is not true. It is not the compassion or pity of God that is purchased by the death of Christ, but the souls of men. He laid down his life as a ransom for us. The text says positively that "God so loved the world." The primary source of salvation is the love of God, who is rich in mercy. He was self-

moved to show mercy. All His motives to love us were found in His own perfect benignity. Christ did not die that God might love man. He died because God loved man. "God commendeth His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him." "Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiator of our sins." The atonement, then, is not the *cause*, but the *effect* of the love of God. The Supreme Being was under no necessity to provide salvation for us. Our goodness extendeth not to Him. His revenue of glory would have been forever complete without us. Nor was there anything in us to merit such an interposition of mercy. God, as the self-existing, all-sufficient, and Almighty Creator, traveled not out of Himself for a motive. He loved us because He would, and He sent His Son to redeem us, and so to redeem us as to magnify His law, and harmonize justice, truth, and holiness, with the exercise of mercy to the penitent and believing. As man had violated the divine law, he was liable to the dreadful consequences of transgression. He had sinned, and he deserved to die. To all created beings his fate seemed fixed. But God, who is rich in mercy, devised a plan by which the evil of sin might be exhibited to the intelligent universe in a light far stronger than if the whole race of man had perished forever, and yet the violators of His law He saved with an everlasting salvation.

This plan was to send His own Son to take our place, to suffer and die for us. He made His Son, who knew no sin, to be a sin-offering for us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." "God laid on him the iniquities of us all." "God hath set forth His Son to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins, that he might be just, and yet the justifier of him that believes in Jesus;" that he might indeed be a "just God, and a Saviour." It was to rescue us from perdition, to renew our natures, and give us a fitness for heaven, that "God spared not His own Son, but delivered him up" as a victim in our room and for our transgressions. He was wounded for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was on him. If it were a strong proof of Abraham's love to God, that he did not withhold his son, his only son Isaac, how shall we estimate the love of God to our lost world, in giving up His only begotten and well-beloved Son to be a sacrifice and an offering for our salvation.

III. The next topic in the text is the great design of Christ's coming into the world. It was not to condemn the world. He came not to destroy the Gentiles, as the Jews thought the Messiah would do; but to save both Jews and Gentiles, who would

believe in him. Jewish teachers expected that Messiah would punish the heathen nations, when he came for the deliverance of their own people. It was, however, not to condemn, but to save the world that God sent his Son. He came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them from the evils of sin—to deliver them from ignorance and error, and guilt and depravity and wretchedness, in all their various forms. Messiah's great mission is described here both negatively and positively: negatively, "not to condemn"—"that the world may not perish"—that as sinners men may not fall under the awful consequences of their transgressions. As the whole world lieth in wickedness; as the wages of sin is death; as men are alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them. As they are by nature sunk in ignorance and moral pollution, so they must sink deeper and deeper in guilt and depravity and misery, unless, some remedy is offered. This remedy is the mission of the Son of God into our world. He came to deliver men—not one particular nation, but men of every nation, from the tremendous aggregation of evils consequent upon rebellion against God. And hence, positively God sent his Son that the world might have life—"that the world through him might be saved." The object of his death is not merely to deliver us from sin, but to raise us to holiness; not merely to rescue us from perdition, but to place us in heaven; not merely to save us from perdition, but to redeem us to God, and to make us holy and happy forever. The design of Messiah's mission was therefore wholly different in three most important points from what the Jews expected. Punishment was not at all the object of the Messiah's coming. The deliverance which he came to effect was not secular, but spiritual, and it was intended, not for the nation of the Jews exclusively, but for mankind generally. The object of his mission was purely merciful. His salvation had a direct reference to the soul and eternity.

IV. And what, my beloved hearers, were the great means by which the design of Messiah's mission was to be accomplished? Two clauses in the text point out these means: "God gave his Son"—"and as Moses," &c. The first of these is literal, and the second is figurative. "God gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." This is a literal statement of facts; and here again our Lord corrects the false views generally entertained by the Jews. They expected that the Messiah was to accomplish the deliverance of Israel, and the destruction of the nations, by being exalted or "lifted up:" elevated first to the throne of David, his father, and then to the throne of the world. Now, says our Lord, it is true, Messiah shall be lifted up; but he shall be lifted up in a very different way from what

you expect. He shall be lifted up, not as David or Solomon was to the throne of Israel, but as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. As if He had said, "There is a striking analogy between the way in which the Messiah shall obtain spiritual and eternal salvation for mankind, and the way in which the serpent stung the Israelites in the wilderness, were cured of the otherwise incurable distemper which they had brought on themselves by their unbelief and disobedience." (See Numb. xxi. 49.) By being "lifted up," we are told in another place, he signified what death he should die. (John xii. 32, 33.) The salvation of mankind is to be obtained by the Messiah's dying an accursed death, as the victim for human transgressions; and by his being held up in the Gospel as the Lamb slain from before the foundations of the world to take away the sin of the world, men are to be converted and made partakers in the blessings of the kingdom of heaven. This was not what Nicodemus expected. He looked for a great temporal prince, who should reign on the throne of David. How great, then, must have been his astonishment to be told that the Messiah was to see the death of a felonious slave. This is indeed a mystery—yet it is a precious truth, that we are saved by the Divine Incarnate Saviour, suffering and dying as a victim for sin—dying on the cross. The two phrases, "God gave his son," and "the Son of Man lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," convey to us this great truth. They both agree in assuring us that God graciously appointed his Son to be the Saviour of the world. If we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead—who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification, then are we justified by faith, and have peace with God. (Rom. iv. 5.) "He gave himself for our sins," according to the Scriptures, "that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the richness of God's grace.

V. A still more important point presented, my fellow citizens, in the passage of Scripture before us is, How shall we obtain a personal interest in the blessings procured by the gift of God, and the lifting up of the Son of Man? Here, again, we have a two-fold representation. Figuratively, looking at the Son of Man lifted up, and literally, believing on the Son of God, "that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." The Jews believe that they should secure a share in the blessings of the Messiah's Kingdom by being descendants of Abraham; and that the only way a Gentile could participate with them in these blessings, was by submitting to Messiah's conquering arms, and becoming proselytes to the Jewish religion. In opposition

to these false views, our Lord states that it was only by believing in Him, the Messiah, as "lifted up"—as "given by the Father," that even a Jew could become a partaker of the blessings of his salvation; and that every Gentile who should thus believe in him, should become a partaker, likewise, of the same blessings. The allusion to the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness illustrates most happily and clearly the *means* by which the Messiah was to obtain salvation for men, and the *manner* in which, as individuals, we are to become interested in that salvation. The meaning cannot be misunderstood. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness that whosoever of the bitten Hebrews looked at it might not die, but live, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever of the ruined race of man believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. As there was no difficulty in apprehending the meaning of the statement in regard to the brazen serpent, so there ought to be no difficulty in understanding the statement in regard to the lifting up of the Son of Man. Every serpent-stung Israelite who looked on the lifted up serpent of brass, was healed. So every sinner who believes on Christ as the Messiah lifted up, shall be saved. We all know what it is to *look;* and we may all know equally well what it is to *believe.* To believe, in a Scriptural sense, is just to receive as true all that God has said to us. To believe in Christ the Son of Man, *lifted up,* is to receive as true what is stated to us in the Gospel concerning him. The terms of salvation are particularly and specifically set forth in several passages of the New Testament, such as the following: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "He that heareth my Word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation." "It is the will of Him that sent me, that every one that believeth on me may have everlasting life." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "By grace are we saved through faith."

But finally, the economy of salvation, like the pillar of cloud and fire between the Hebrews and Egyptians, has two sides to it. One is radiant with glory, the other is dark and threatening, and whosoever looks upon it, has need to be troubled. The guilt and danger of neglecting this method of salvation are unspeakably great. How strikingly are they stated in the verses before us: "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation," &c.

"He that believeth not" comprehends all who reject Christ as set forth in the Gospel. All who discredit the testimony divine, and all who deny it—and all who refuse to obey Christ's commands come under the condemnation spoken of in the text. No matter what might have been the excuse of the serpent-bitten Hebrew if he looked not to the serpent of brass, lifted up by

Divine appointment, he died. So whether it be through ignorance, or pride, or a love of sinning, that men reject Christ, if they reject him they must perish. The means of their recovery may have appeared to the Israelites as arbitrary, foolish, paradoxical—they may not have comprehended why such a way was proposed, nor have been able to see how it was that they could be saved by such a simple thing as looking to the serpent of brass—but it was so. Nor was there any other way. The method of their deliverance was simple and easy. It was to *look* to the brazen serpent, and whosoever did so was saved. You observe, my brethren, the principal word in our Lord's declaration concerning the guilt and danger of those that believe not is "condemned." The primary meaning is to be sentenced to punishment, in opposition to being acquitted or pardoned. Then our Lord's meaning is—while he who believes the testimony of God concerning his Son is "not condemned," but pardoned and accepted as righteous—on the other hand, he that does not believe is "already" condemned—even now he is sentenced to punishment—doomed to destruction. The Gospel offer finds man a sinner, doomed by the holy law of God to death. It presents to him a full and free pardon; that pardon, however, from the very nature of the case, can be received only by faith, and as a matter of course, the unbeliever continues without it. He remains as he was before he heard of it—a condemned sinner. And still more, he is emphatically condemned, because he has not believed on the only begotten Son of God—"condemned," because he tramples at once on the authority of God, as manifested in the commandment to believe on his Son, and on the grace of God, that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us, and offers him to us in the Gospel. He must not, therefore, complain of Adam's sin; for he has had the offer of perfect deliverance from it; but by refusing this deliverance, he fastens on himself its condemnation, and adds the still greater one of rejecting salvation through the death of the Son of God. Fearful, therefore, is the doom of the incorrigibly wicked, and finally impenitent. "He that believeth not shall be damned."

Whatever men may think of Christ and Him crucified, He is the only saviour of sinners. There is but one way to obtain deliverance from the burden of guilt. Men must believe in Jesus Christ, that they may obtain the forgiveness of sin. If they do not, their guilt remains. There is no other expiation for sin, but the atonement of Christ, and there is no saving interest in that atonement but through believing. The bitten Hebrew that would not perish must look to the brazen serpent. The patient that will not use the only and the effectual remedy to cure him of a disease that is pressing upon him, must die. Men are sinners—and their only hope of being saved is in Christ; but if they reject Him, they must perish. Unbelief is a great sin, involving

deep guilt and exposing us to the wrath of God. It is to disobey God, and treat with contempt His Son. No doctrine of the Christian system is more unpalatable to unholy men than the necessity of being born again, and the urgency of faith in Christ as a Saviour. But we cannot speak neither more nor less than the word of God. Suppose among the murmuring Hebrews there was a man, respectable and well to do, moral and decent, amiable and intelligent, who, on being stung by a serpent, concluded that a chance had happened to him, and that by using the ordinary means he should be healed; and on hearing what Moses had done, smiled inwardly at the folly of those who could expect to be cured by looking at a brazen serpent; and determined that he would die sooner than degrade himself by such fanatical folly. And while his neighbors are looking and being healed, his case becomes more and more desperate, and now he dies—and his ungodly pride is his destroyer. And another stung by the serpent is so obstinate, and self-willed, and conceited, that he will not look and be healed. His parents beseech him to cast one look towards the brazen serpent before he dies—his kind friends try to turn his face towards the pole, that he may catch one glimpse of the appointed remedy—but he will not look, and he dies, and upon his own head rest the consequences—he was his own destroyer. So now, my beloved hearers, you are all sinners. God has provided, at an immense cost, the way to save you, and He has given you a plain account of this way, accompanied by satisfactory evidence of its truthfulness, and all He requires of you is, that you believe on his authority the testimony before you. The Son of man is lifted up before you this day.

SERMON DCLXXXVII.

BY REV. HOLLIS READ,

CRANEVILLE, N. J.

CHRIST BEFORE THE WORLD WAS.

"Before Abraham was, I am."—JOHN viii. 58.

THE one design of the evangelical preacher is, to *preach Christ.* But you no sooner begin to think on this sublimest of themes, than it swells into an importance, and covers an extent of ground not at first suspected. It is a broad field entered by a narrow way and a strait gate. You may see some of its glories re-

flected on objects around you; you may inhale some of its fragrant odors; and imperfectly taste some of its rich fruits, before you enter—enough to satisfy you that the ways of wisdom are pleasant, and all her paths peace. Yet these are but the reflected excellencies of their originals within the veil. You must enter and pluck these flowers, and eat these fruits, and expatiate on the moral beauties of this celestial Eden; you must put on Christ; must know by experience something of the height and depth and length and breadth of the love of Christ, before you can appreciate our theme.

In making Christ our subject we know not where to begin, or where to end. Should we begin at the cradle of Bethlehem, a voice would issue from the throne of the most excellent Majesty, saying, "Before Abraham was, I AM." Or go we back to the days of that patriarch, and identify Christ with the angel of the covenant, we are still admonished that, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." We should therefore fail to delineate Christ in the several aspects and offices in which he appears, if we did not contemplate him as he was in the beginning, or before the world was.

It is important that we here bear in mind the peculiar position in which Christ stands to our world, and which exalts him in our esteem beyond all price, and shows us the absolute necessity that we engage, in our behalf, his interest at the court of heaven. It is this: *that to him God committed all things as touching this world.* The moment sin entered, and this earth became a revolted province, all intercourse between heaven and earth was cut off—except as a matter of negotiation. Sin had put enmity between God and man, and God would no more treat with man, except through a Mediator. Satan raised his standard; the conflict has been for the dominion of this world—the Devil and his angels, or adherents, contending with Michael and his angels. Officially, God will have nothing to do with this world till it is restored to its allegiance. All done to restore it, must be done through a Mediator appointed for the purpose. Would God subdue his foes, it is done through Christ, the captain of his hosts; would he communicate his will, propose terms of reconciliation, Christ is the Logos, the Word, by whom he speaks; would he dispense pardon to penitent rebels, and restore them to favor, the Son is the daysman to blot out the handwriting of death, and to present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Every thing relating to the mediatorial kingdom is committed to Christ; the government of this world, the dominion over angels, and the final judgment.

Christ, then, is our all in all. If we would make a single approach towards God, it must be through him. But in contemplating Christ the inquiry naturally arises—

I. Did the Second Person in the Trinity exist *before* he entered on the mediatorial work, and what rank did he then hold? Or were there no distinctions of persons in the Godhead? From eternity as well as to eternity Christ was God. "Before Abraham was, I AM." He hesitates not to appropriate to himself this peculiar name of Jehovah, I AM, the verb of existence—he that was, and is, and is to come, the Alpha and Omega—God from eternity. Again, he prays: "Glorify me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." He was in the beginning, he was with God, and he was God. "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the world was. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, was I brought forth. When he prepared the heavens, when he gave to the sea his decree, when he appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by him *as one brought up with him;* and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him—and my delights were with the sons of men." He was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person.

Before the incarnation—before the earth was—Christ was God—was King and Sovereign of the universe—the co-equal of the Father, and shared with him all the honors and prerogatives of the eternal throne—raised above all principalities and powers—enthroned amidst dominions, attended by angels, and honored by archangels. All creatures do him reverence. The morning stars sing before him, and the sons of God shout for joy. But he descends from his throne, lays aside the sceptre and the crown, and yields up the glory he had with the Father. He becomes the babe of Bethlehem, though once the King of glory. He becomes the man of sorrows, though once in the bosom of the Father, in whose presence is joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures forevermore. Angels desire to look into these things. To see the Sovereign of ten thousand worlds humble himself to become a man—to take on him the form of a servant—to submit to the infirmities and temptations of humanity, transcended the conception of the wisest angel.

II. The next aspect in which I would have you contemplate Christ as pre-existent, is in the *Covenant of Redemption*—the compact or agreement entered into by the three persons of the Godhead, by which each stood pledged to act a specified part, and each harmonize with the other. The manner and terms of this covenant appear in the 53d chapter of Isaiah. I quote the passage as translated by Bishop Lowth: "If he shall make a propitiatory sacrifice, he shall see a seed which shall prolong their days, and (the pleasure) the gracious purpose of Jehovah shall prosper in his hands. Of the travail of his soul he shall see (the fruit) and be satisfied. By the knowledge of him shall my servant justify many; for the punishment of their iniquity he shall

another Herod's scorn—the bearer of his own cross to Calvary—the sufferer on the accursed tree. Can any thing exceed the solemn sublimity of such a Personage, in full view of all that must befall him, entering on such an undertaking?

III. The next attitude in which I would present Christ is *as Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things.* The great and leading object of God, as touching this world, doubtless is the work of human redemption: and as he saw fit to commit this work, officially, to his Son, he committed to him, also, the work of previous arrangements, among which were the creation, preservation and government of the world. A suitable platform or theatre for the acting of the august drama of man's salvation, must be erected. This was the work of the second Person in the Trinity. "By him all things were made, and without him was not any thing made that was made." And not only the earth, but the universe: "For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers, all things were created by him and for him:" for the manifestation of his glory, for the illustration of his benevolence in the work of Redemption.

The creation of angels, and probably of the universe, was preparatory and auxiliary to the work of Redemption. For we know not what positions and relations human redemption may have to the universal empire of God. It may be that the attributes herein developed and the principles herein exemplified are essential to the highest good and the final perfection of the entire family of intelligent beings, from the highest and holiest angel, down to the humblest of an earth-born race. Angels are Christ's messengers, ministering spirits to them that shall be heirs of salvation. Though to human vision behind the curtain, they are important actors on the great theatre—parts of the great prospective arrangement entered upon before the foundation of the world.

Nor is it enough that Christ has built the platform on which the august drama is to be acted, and fitted it up with every needed appendage, and formed all the actors, but the preservation and government of the whole is committed to his hands: "By him all things consist." "Who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, upholds all things by the word of his power."

He is, too, the Governor of all he has made: "His throne is forever and ever." "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands." "The government shall be upon his shoulders." "He is Lord of all things." Jesus says, "All power in heaven and earth is given to me." "I have the keys of death and hell. I shut and no one openeth; I open and no one shutteth."

To what a commanding position these few scattered declarations exalt Christ. He is the great Proprietor of all things, whether of this world, or the countless systems of worlds which occupy immeasurable space. He is the Author of all things, of men, of angels, of things visible and invisible. By his strong arm all are sustained. From the exhaustless storehouse of his riches all are supplied; and his sceptre is swayed over all the works of his hands.

Such is the Saviour to whom the Christian may come and repose an undying confidence. He may lean upon him as on a never-failing support. From this fountain of all blessedness he derives strength, grace, wisdom, all things needful either for the body or the soul, for time or eternity. What security the Christian has here! His hopes, his confidence is in the mighty One of Israel. What grounds of confidence have we here that all things shall work together for good to them that love God—to them who are the called according to his purpose. For if Christ be the Proprietor of all things, and have all needful power to exercise dominion over all things; and if it be his good pleasure —his eternal purpose—to bring all that put their trust in him to glory, all that make him their friend must be safe. He cherishes in us no delusive hope when he says, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hands." Omnipotence is engaged for them. No power in the universe can frustrate the purposes of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And such, too, on the other hand, is the Saviour offered to the sinner. He is mighty to save—able to save to the utmost all that come to him—able to keep them from the evil that is in the world, and to present them faultless before the presence of the Father's glory—able to control all events for them in such a manner as shall bring them safe to heaven. He is just such a Saviour, or friend, as a sinner needs. But oh! what a fearful thing to have such a Being for an enemy. Suppose he were but a man, a kind, benevolent human monarch, clothed in supreme power, the owner of your property and lives, yet just and benevolent to all who should regard his will; would it not be dreadful to encounter such a potentate as your enemy? You would thereby forfeit all his favor—forfeit all your privileges under his rule, and you would engage his power, and his justice armed by his displeasure against you. You would be ruined. A dungeon and chains might be the portion of your cup. You might have basked in the sunshine of the royal favor, and shared in all the good that his vast power, and justice, and great benevolence could bestow. But you made him your enemy; you fell under his displeasure, and were crushed beneath his power. But how infinitely more dreadful to fall under the displeasure, and to be crushed beneath the power of Him who is able to destroy both

soul and body in hell. The mightiest monarch can no more than kill the body. The Judge of all can shut the soul out from his favor forever. He can destroy it in hell. What a price, then, is put into the sinner's hands to get wisdom. But oh, what a forfeiture if he fail! He must become an eternal bankrupt in spite of all that Heaven has done to make him rich, honored, and happy.

Look at Christ, my impenitent friends, in the position in which he is now before you, and say if you do not discover much—if you do not discover every thing which ought to bring you to Christ. If infinite love, and exhaustless goodness could draw you, you would come. If the fear of having arrayed against you omnipotent power, and unbending justice, and rejected and slighted goodness could alarm you, you would be alarmed, and flee from the wrath to come.

IV. I present Christ in one other attitude—as he appears in *the promise made to our first parents.* Whatever had been transacting within the veil—in the Holy of holies above—nothing of the stupendous scheme of mercy had before transpired on earth—not an intimation had been given before in this world, nor in the outer court of heaven where angels and archangels stand and worship the uncreated Divinity in the inner sanctuary, that there could be such a thing as the pardon of sin. Not a fact had transpired in the whole universe to warrant any such hope. This transcended the experience of angels. Their own dominions and principalities had been invaded by sin. Like a malignant sirocco, they had seen sin sweep over the fairest of the heavenly fields, and lay prostrate in its course some of the loveliest plants of Paradise. But they knew nothing of any system of restoration. Every victim of sin, they had seen instantly seized and cast out of heaven as a putrid mass—an infectious nuisance—reserved in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day. And what less can they expect, should a similar insurrection break out in any province of God's vast dominions?

But what did they at length witness? The earth was created and fitted up for human habitation, with every comfort and convenience which could contribute to the well-being of a holy race. Nothing was wanting that could make holy beings happy. No disease had yet floated in its virgin atmosphere. No tear had flown; no groan had given signs of pain; no malignant passion had yet poisoned the social joys of a new and happy race. The intercourse, too, between heaven and earth was familiar and sweet. Man bore the image of his God, and he was the welcome companion of angels. Thus did this new world, formed, fitted up, beautified by the hand of infinite Perfection, issue from its chaotic cloud, and as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, rejoice as a strong man to run a race. Every thing

to angelic or human ken, gave promise that this planet was added as another star in the crown of the Sovereign Ruler of the skies.

But a change comes over the scene as the earth rolls on, measuring out its annual rounds of blessedness to a loyal and happy pair, its brightness is eclipsed. Its song of joy is turned into a wail of woe and lamentation. The earth is now dark; its beauty is defaced; its gold has become dim, its most fine gold changed; and all its pleasant things are laid waste and become the heritage of the spoiler. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain. But what has wrought this change? What has drawn the curtain of thick darkness over a world so recently illumined by the brightness of the Father's countenance? What has so soon changed this happy spot into an abyss of woe? Oh! it is sin—sin that has extinguished the light of heaven which used to shine so sweetly here. It is sin that has struck the fatal blow—that has brought death and all its woes. It is sin that has laid man in ruins, and drawn the sable folds as a winding sheet about this fallen world.

Contemplate the world in the position in which it is brought by sin. It stood in the same relation to God that the sinning angels did when they apostatized. As far as any former development of grace went to show, there was no hope in heaven or earth for sinning man. He, with all his wretched posterity had only to look forward to blackness and darkness forever—the companion of fallen angels, reserved in chains of darkness unto the great day. But, in the midst of this general gloom—amidst the groanings of the prisoners and the cries of them that are bound, what do I hear! It is but an indistinct voice—but it is the sound of peace to the troubled soul. It is the voice of liberty to the captives. It is light to them that sit in darkness—pardon to the guilty—life to the dead. It was the first intimation that sin might be pardoned and the sinner saved from remediless woe. It was the first note of redeeming love that was ever struck in this lower world—the first the heavenly choir ever sung. Yet our ears may have become so accustomed to the sounds which then were so wondrously strange, so sweetly sublime to angelic ears, that we may well nigh have overlooked this first announcement of mercy to our ruined world. It came in terms like these: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

No sooner had man fallen than Christ entered on the mediatorial work. He had undertaken it, prepared himself for it, provided the chief actors and the place on which they should act, but nothing had transpired on earth till now. The moment Satan dared place his polluted foot on this beautiful and holy earth, the angel of the covenant—the mighty angel that John saw standing on

the sea and on the earth, the Proprietor and Governor of both, met him at the threshold, and raised the banners of his empire there. Man had sinned, and Satan now claimed the entire race as his own. His claim was disputed by the vicegerent of heaven —and from this time the conflict began.

What a day was this in heaven—what a day to man! The annunciation of pardon to the sinner through the blood of the Son of God formed a new era in the history of the universe. Not a question could have risen before, that inevitable perdition was the portion of all that sinned. But a new song is now heard in heaven, and new hope smiles on earth. By the entrance of sin all had become dark. Spiritual night covered the earth. But the morning had come—light began to streak the eastern horizon. The "promise" was the first dawning of gospel light on this dark world. It was the sure precursor of the Sun of Righteousness. Christ was in this promise, the Saviour of a race yet to be born. Can you view him in a more interesting posture this side of the cross? It is in this position you see him more especially as the Hope of the World. The star that now arose on the dark and troubled waters of sin, was the star of hope. But for this light, the world had remained in total, unbroken darkness. But for this hope, man, in all his passing, hapless generations, had been shut up in the prison-house of fell despair forever. Had not Christ appeared as the seed of the woman that should bruise the serpent's head, man had been bruised, crushed, ruined, beneath the power of God's violated law.

What a pleasing, vital interest, have we, then, in this first presentation of the Lamb of God that should take away the sin of the world. Not yet incarnate, not yet presented as an offering for sin, yet he stood pledged to the great work of expiation and intercession, and held forth the unfailing promise that he would accomplish the work given to do.

The subject urges on us a few brief reflections:

1. If Christ occupies the positions here assigned him, under what obligations are Christians to be entirely his? His by creation, by preservation and government, as well as by redemption, how ought we to be his in affection, in honor, in service? How ought we to render him what is so richly his due? We owe him all things; and what robbery if we do not yield to him the whole heart, mind, soul, and strength. What, then, means this indifference, lukewarmness, deadness? Has Christ laid us under no obligations—required nothing of us—assigned us nothing to do? Shall we live as drones in the common hive? What do ye more than others, who make no professions?

2. What a comfortable security the Christian has, that if he trust in Christ he can never fail.

3. If Christ be what has been represented, how desperate is the case of the impenitent sinner! If you make Him who is the

Owner of all things, and the Governor of all, your enemy, and provoke him to shut you out from his favor, whither will you go —where will you seek a refuge? You become an outcast, destitute and wretched indeed. Hell shall be your only portion—the only spot where you shall find a place.

Will you, then, sinner, not stop and contemplate this "great sight?" The King of Glory, the Author and Finisher of salvation for you, you see here approaching this rebellious province and entering on his self-denying, humiliating work. He comes to vanquish Satan, to destroy sin, and to save sinners like you. Will you not, then, hear his voice, accept his offering, and receive him for *your* Saviour? He knocks at the door of your heart, will you not arise and let him in?

SERMON DCLXXXVIII.

BY REV. DAVID H. COYNER,

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A FUNERAL DISCOURSE.

"Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel; and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God."—Amos iv. 12.

The nation of Israel still persisted in rebellion and impenitence, notwithstanding the repeated warnings which God had given them, and the judgments he had already inflicted upon them. They must, therefore, expect more decisive marks of divine indignation against them for their sins. God was about to meet them, and in incensed wrath; and he warns them to prepare for an event so tremendous. God will show himself the adversary of the wicked; and will make them feel that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." He is the heart-searching and omniscient Judge of all men; the Creator of the mountains; the sovereign Disposer of the winds and of the storms; the high Arbiter of every man's prosperity and adversity; and he turneth the bright morning of success and triumph into the dark night of adversity, sorrow, and deep despair.

To this view of God, the prophet calls the people in the words immediately following our text. But passing by the circumstances of the Israelites, upon whom God was about to take vengeance by means of the Assyrian armies, let us improve the warning in our text suitably to the present very impressive occasion.

I. We shall show the *certainty* of a future judgment; where we all must meet God.

II. We shall aim to show what each one must now do, that we may then meet him with comfort and peace.

I. At death, God passes a particular judgment upon every man. Every soul, at death, passes, according to the decision of the Almighty Judge, immediately either into Paradise, "and when absent from the body is present with the Lord," or is in hell, waked up in the misery of the lost. But at the Resurrection—at the last day—there will be a general judgment; and "they that have done good, shall come forth to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation." *This* will be a most awful day.

"A day of wrath, a dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away;
When shrivelling like a parched scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll.
And louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead."

That a time is approaching when God will reward the good and punish the wicked—the terrors and fears which haunt the guilty conscience, clearly indicate. This testimony is felt by all men, and all are possessed of this apprehension by the moral constitution which God has given them, and they cannot free themselves from it. The heathen, as is proved by their religious history, were fully possessed of this peculiar apprehension. What but the certain dread of meeting God, in terrible judgment, filled the breast of Belshazzar with so much consternation when he beheld the ominous fingers which wrote, in mysterious characters, his doom, upon the wall of his banqueting-room. And why did Felix, the Roman governor, tremble when his prisoner reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come? It was the irresistible conviction that he should meet his injured and offended Creator in solemn judgment. We, therefore, have the proof in our consciences that we must each of us stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, to answer for the deeds done in the body.

There is another strong proof of the certainty of a future judgment derived from the perfections of God. Although sin and transgression often make the lot of the sinner hard in this life; yet this world cannot be the place of retribution. Here we often see wickedness and the basest deceit and hypocrisy for a time triumphant; whilst the upright, pious, and devoted servants of God are often cruelly oppressed. Now, if God reigns over men, and be just at the same time; and if the scriptural declaration be true, "that the Judge of all the earth will do right;" and if he be a God of immutable holiness, justice, goodness, and truth—he will—he must—necessarily punish the bad and reward the good.

But, not to mention other cogent reasons which might be named—such as our relation to him as our Creator, and our absolute dependence on him as such, and his being the moral Governor and Lawgiver of us his rational creatures, to whom we are accountable and must answer for all our words and deeds—we will now refer you to the Holy Scriptures, in which this awful but very useful doctrine is fully taught, in plain and express terms, both in the Old Testament and the New. Jude quotes a prophecy of Enoch: "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Abra-

ham gives it, as the character of Jehovah, that as Judge of all the earth, he will do right. But if this same awful truth is taught, by different writers of the Old Testament; it is still more clearly and abundantly in the New by our divine Lord and his inspired apostles.

And what can equal, in awful grandeur, the different separate descriptions of this scene which are given to us in this part of the Sacred Volume. "The Judge shall come in the clouds of heaven. Every eye shall see him; at his presence, the heavens and the earth shall flee away, and there shall no place be found for them." As indications of the approach of the final conflagration, it may be, low and terribly mysterious sounds will be heard, awakening the suspicion that some dreadful hour is at hand. Vivid lightnings stand for a time in the heavens, quivering and trembling, and then dart fearfully across the skies. The mysterious sounds first heard continue to come, louder and heavier, until they swell into the vast detonations of mighty earthquakes and the awful crash of worlds coming in collision with worlds. As when Vesuvius and Etna, in the trembling of their mountains and convulsions, give unmistakable indications of their terrible and destructive eruptions; the affrighted inhabitants of the two Sicilies vainly run to and fro to find a shelter from the storms of melted lava that threaten universal ruin. So when the earth trembles and the mountains shake from the convulsions of an expiring universe, its dismayed inhabitants will more vainly seek a covert from the last great tempest of Jehovah's destructive power. All of the race of Adam, of every age, shall feel and know that the last great day is come. Then shall the universe of intelligent beings discern between the righteous and the wicked; for the righteous shall ascend to glory, to honor, and immortal life in heaven; whilst the wicked sink down to shame and contempt and everlasting wailings in hell. If any are disposed to ask, is there any way to escape from so awful a trial, or to avoid the meeting of God in judgment? We answer, *No.* How, how can any escape? Can the sinner flee from the government of God, and place himself under that of another? Can he escape the vigilance of Omniscience? or get beyond the reach of Omnipotence? Or can man become independent of his God, and set him at defiance? If these things are impossible, then every one of us must give an account of himself to God. And it is immutably true, that God will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or bad. The great difficulty here does not lie in the want of proof that we all must meet God in judgment; but in the want of the conviction of the fact. If men believed that they must meet God at death and in judgment, would they live as, alas! multitudes do, both in and out of the visible church? Who that firmly believes that he shall shortly meet God in judgment, would act the hypocrite towards God or deceitfully and falsely towards man? Could any one dare interpose in the sacred interests of Christ's kingdom, who is himself conscious that he does not even keep up the forms of religion? if he indeed believes that God says to such, "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue framest deceit. These things hast thou done; and I kept silence. Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself; but I will reprove thee and set them in order before thine eyes. Now,

consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." How hard is it to bring men to believe that they shall very shortly give an account of themselves in the final judgment? even whilst the earth itself, as it were, groans under the burden of their sins. But our unbelief and want of conviction of this awful truth will not retard the day of our meeting with God, or disannul the fixed decree of Heaven appointing that men shall once die, and after that be judged. Fix it, therefore, in your hearts, that you must all very shortly meet God in judgment.

II. As to the preparation necessary to meet God with comfort and peace, we proceed to remark, that it does not consist "in works of righteousness that we have done," however valuable they may be to society. Alas! in the sight of an infinitely holy God, all our righteousness is but "filthy rags." By the deeds of the law, no flesh living can be justified in his sight, neither can we be prepared by any outward acts of religion, however zealously performed, without real inward holiness of heart, and without that love to God and man which constitute the essence of true religion. But the very important question arises, how is depraved and guilty man to obtain this holiness of heart? How? We give the same answer to you, and we are not authorized to give a different one, which Paul and Silas gave to the awakened and inquiring jailor—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." We must first, and last, and always, and only meet God in Christ, who is the Mediator between God and man. For God out of Christ, or aside from Christ, is "a consuming fire." We never can find pardon and salvation until we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our peace. In him we have righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Christ himself invites the weary and the heavy-laden unto him for rest. The Father is well-pleased in his Son, and will not reject the soul that trusts in him, and forsakes all to follow him. Here we find a righteousness that is complete, and that will justify us before God. In him we find the most powerful motives to hate and forsake sin. It is the cross of Christ that makes the heart to feel indifferent to this world, and renders its riches, its honors, and its pleasures comparative trifles, that are without any substantial value. Christ breaks the fetters of sin, and bestows upon the emancipated and renewed soul the liberty of the sons of God.

To faith in Christ, we must add repentance of our sins, and works meet for repentance, if we would obtain the necessary preparation. This is a duty, not less enjoined by reason than revelation, when we sin against God or man. For nothing is more just and reasonable than to be sorry for the wrongs we have done, and so change our conduct as to make all the reparation for them that we can. But that our repentance would be available for us, and be accepted of God, we only can know from the Gospel. Repentance is the forsaking of sin, the sorrow and regret for our guilt, and a change of conduct in the fixed purpose never to be guilty again.

Furthermore, let it be understood that a disposition to obey all the commandments of God, is involved in the preparation mentioned in our text. The very essence, indeed, of religion is, the spirit of obedience to Christ. A partial compliance with some of the duties of religion, whilst

others equally important are neglected, is not what we mean as sufficient here. Every duty must be attended to, in its place and at the proper time. Nor will it do to think, that to be punctual and faithful in some duties will make up or atone for the omission of others equally important. We cannot thus compound matters with God. Nor will it answer to expect that performing the common duties of morality will expiate for the want of piety towards God; or that a superabundance of zeal, in some things pertaining to God and religion, will compensate for the violation of mercy and truth and righteousness toward men. David said, "then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all of thy commandments."

If we would prepare to meet God in peace and comfort when we shall see him on the throne of final judgment; we must often meet with him in prayer whilst he occupies the mercy-seat. For your benefit, to hear your petitions, he is now on this mercy-seat. But he will soon vacate this seat for the throne of the Judge. Now, therefore, is the time to petition, to pray, to seek. Sad, indeed, is the state, and gloomy are the future prospects of those who seldom or never pray. And they pray not because they have never felt their sinfulness and poverty. How can they, who are strangers to private prayer, or who, if they have families, have erected no altar of prayer to the God of Heaven; who offer to him no sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise, and supplicate him for no mercy, be prepared to meet God, except with terror and dismay?

But they who have made a covenant with God by prayer; who have made supplication to him with strong crying and tears; who have often received gracious answers from him, and found him a present and prompt help in times of trouble; and to whom, in his most gracious condescension, he has granted the privilege of freely expressing to him all that their hearts feel or desire in times of distress or affliction; have, as it were, contracted an intimacy with God, and shall meet him not only with comfort and peace, but through the riches of his grace shall enter heaven itself, with songs and shouting and everlasting joy upon their heads.

Solemn and impressive, indeed, are the circumstances under which we are now assembled. One younger, perhaps, than four-fifths of this large assembly, has been called from time to eternity. One of *us*. One that has lived among us from her birth until her death. One that we knew. One that we dearly loved. One that was amiable, modest, quiet, and good, and as such very highly appreciated by her numerous acquaintances and friends. She is not *here*. She has gone to meet her God, we believe, in much peace of mind. We indulge the confident hope, that by the mercy and grace of God she was prepared for the event. During her sickness, the state of her mind was uniformly calm and quiet. Death came without any of its usual terrors. When she was dying, she distinctly and emphatically remarked, "What a beautiful morning is *this*—what a beautiful morning!" Sweet child! it was, indeed, a beautiful morning, when the glorious dawn of immortal life came over thy pure and precious soul. It was "a beautiful morning," when thy liberated spirit triumphantly and happily ascended to the God who gave it. When the night of death passed away, and thy favored eyes were graciously permitted to see the day-break of a bright and endless being, no wonder, dear sister, thou didst, in the raptures of thy soul, exclaim, "What a beautiful morning!"

Yes. It was a beautiful, glorious morning, when sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust in the Redeemer, your spirit triumphed over the terrors of death, and ascended on high to dwell with the just and the good. It was a beautiful morning, thou sweet, rapt seraph; it was a beautiful morning.

Friends of the deceased, as it is your privilege to indulge the hope of her present happiness, your duty will lead you to bow submissively to Him whose grace is sufficient to sustain you in this great trial. God alone can effectually help in distress. The sympathies of friends, however tender, cannot reach your case in such circumstances; but your heavenly Parent can pour into your hearts the wine and the oil of his divine consolation. Look out of yourselves. Look to the *future*. Look upward. Look to God. And let us not forget that all of us very soon must follow her.

"As the long train of ages glide away, the sons of men,
The youth in full green spring, and we who go
In the full strength of years, matron and maid,
The bowed with age, the infant in the smiles
And beauty of its innocent age, cut off,
Shall, one by one, be gathered to *her* side."

HYMN.

The chariot! the chariot! its wheels roll in fire,
As the Lord cometh down in the pomp of his ire;
Lo, self-moving, it drives on its pathway of cloud,
And the heavens with the burden of Godhead are bowed.

The glory! the glory! around him are poured,
Mighty hosts of the angels that wait on the Lord:
And the glorified saints and the martyrs are there,
And there all who the palm-wreaths of victory wear.

The trumpet! the trumpet! the dead have all heard;
Lo, the depths of the stone-covered charnel are stirred!
From sea, from the earth, from the south, from the north,
All the vast generation of man are come forth.

The judgment! the judgment! the thrones are all set,
Where the Lamb and the white-vested elders are met:
There all flesh is at once in the sight of the Lord,
And the doom of eternity hangs on his word.

O mercy! O mercy! look down from above,
Great Creator, on us, thy sad children, with love;
When beneath to their darkness the wicked are driven.
May our justified souls find a welcome in heaven.

CHRISTIAN LYRE.

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SERMON DCLXXXIX.

BY REV. A. T. CHESTER, D.D.,

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CHRIST THE HEAD—THE CHURCH THE BODY.

"And gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body."—EPHESIANS i. 22, 23.

THE Church is not any one particular denomination. In the Scriptural use of this name all are meant who have embraced the Lord Jesus Christ in the exercise of a saving faith, and who have professed attachment to Christ according to the forms of some evangelical communion; nay, if they have not made such open profession, because it has been impracticable, they are not on this account excluded from the fellowship of the Son of God. The Church comprises all real Christians. It is this company of true believers that is called in the text the body of Christ. Of this company, considered as a body, Christ is the head.

Could we venture to use language expressing such intimacy between ourselves, poor miserable sinners, and the divine Son of the blessed God, if he himself had not authorized it? Should we dare, even in the use of figurative language, to hint at such a tender and loving union as that which Christ declares to exist between himself, and those whom he has chosen for his own? He says, "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother."

He says to his disciples, "I am the vine, ye are the branches. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me." The Apostle is directed by inspiration to call Jesus Christ "the chief corner stone in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." And under the guidance of the same Spirit, the Apostle calls Christ the husband, and the Church the wife. And again he says, in the Epistle to the Colossians, in exact agreement with the language of the text, "And he is the Head of the body, the Church." These expressions declare a union between the Redeemer and the redeemed so close and tender, as to awaken our astonishment at Christ's condescension, and our warmest gratitude in view of his love.

The text exhibits an arrangement of divine wisdom. God, Jehovah, *gave* his own Son to be head over all things to the Church which is his body. This passage is full of the most important instruction.

I. We have in it a view of *the exaltation of the Church.* It is indeed called the body, and Christ the head, to show his superiority, but we must not suppose that because the Church is a body, it is on this account insignificant or worthless. The character of the body will depend upon the head with which it is joined. We are accustomed to depreciate the excellence, and to deny the glory of our natural bodies, because they are associated with the flesh, which the Scriptures pronounce corrupt and cursed; but then this is a corruption and a curse not literally of the flesh, but of the moral nature. The body of man regarded in itself, contemplated in view of its structure, its capacity of development, its delicate and intricate machinery, its adaptation to all the wants of the living being, and its mysterious connection with the spirit that dwells within its chambers—this body is the most wonderful and glorious of all the visible works of God. The body of a living creature, when properly considered, reflects more honor upon its Creator than the solid masses of many senseless worlds. This body is essential to the completeness of the soul. Here on earth, what is the soul without it? We sometimes call these bodies the fetters of the soul. We call them clay in opposition to spirit. We think that when the soul is freed from these clogs, it will rise to the enjoyment of its full measure of blessedness and knowledge and glory; but yet this truth is also plainly taught in the Scriptures, that a body is essential to the highest development, and to the complete perfection of the soul in eternity. I do not suppose that the disembodied spirit, awaiting the sound of the trumpet that arouses the dead, though in the enjoyment of complete bliss, or in the endurance of unmitigated wo, can either enjoy or suffer as much as when it shall receive its body from the grave and be arrayed for immortality.

A body—of what character we cannot now form an idea—a body is essential to the perfection of the immortal spirit. Such a body Christ himself consents to honor and exalt, as the habitation of his own divine nature, while he shows himself to the adoring hosts of the redeemed, and receives their homage as King of kings and Lord of lords. It is not necessary to connect any idea of disparagement with the Church, because it is called the body of Christ; even that which is named in the figure, this body of clay, is a display of the power and wisdom of God, fitted to call out the highest praise. Each one of us has occasion to use the adoring language of the Psalmist, "I will praise thee, O God, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." But then, what gives its value to the Church, considered as a body, is that it is the body of such a head. The head gives character to the whole being. This is the chief exaltation of the Church, that, as a body is essential, in connection with a head, to make up a living being, so in a certain most important sense, which must now be more fully explained, the Church, as a body, joined to its divine head, is essential to the existence and completeness of the glory and majesty and everlasting dominion of the Son of God as the Redeemer and Saviour of lost men. Certain it is, that Christ could not be what he is without the existence of his Church. He would be divine, one with the Father, "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders." He would be worshipped in heaven, but he would not be known as Redeemer, or Mediator, or Saviour. He would not be regarded as a king while he had no kingdom. He could not be considered as the head if there were no body, or if he were, it would only be to exhibit his incompleteness in this respect. This idea, which seems so important and so interesting, and which in this connection so exalts the Church, is stated in the language connected with the text. It is a remarkable expression, and deserves especial consideration: "And gave him to be the Head over all things to the Church which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." The Church, his body, is his fullness, or, as is the exact meaning of the word, his completeness—that which is wanting to make him perfect—not in his character as God, or the eternal Son, or the Lord of Angels, but as Saviour, Redeemer, Mediator, and King of Saints. Paul says of believers, "and ye are complete in him"—without Christ, man is, and remains an imperfect being. He needs Christ, whatever else he may possess to make him complete in true wisdom, or spiritual excellence, or eternal safety, or infinite glory and bliss. And here we are taught that the Church is the fullness of Christ—he is complete in his people; of course in respect to his purposes of mercy and his work of grace; which yet are the most glorious exhibitions of his nature. We almost shrink from the thought, so much does it elevate the Church. The Church is not merely his chosen

flock to be saved by his blood—not merely his adopted family to be received into his kingdom and made happy there forever, but it is his body, his flesh; for the Apostle says, still more boldly, "for we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones." The Church is the fullness, the completeness of Christ. It is on this account in part, that the Father promised the Son that he should not make the sacrifice of himself in vain—that he should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied—that he should have a seed to serve him—in short, that he should be complete in his connection with the Church, both on earth and in heaven. Already does Christ the Redeemer exhibit his glory in this character to the older inhabitants of heaven as he receives the homage of that portion of the Church that has already crossed the flood and joined itself to his glorious throne; and on earth how can he manifest himself to the ungodly except in this way, showing the power of his grace and exhibiting the riches of his love in calling a people out of the world and bestowing upon them the blessings of his salvation? Would Christ be what he is now in heaven—would he be throughout eternity what we are assured he will be, if, having made his sacrifice, and continuing his merciful intercession, all men should be left to hardness of heart, should resist his mercy, and not one be saved to sing in heaven the praises of redeeming love. Such a result would not, could not rob him of a single ray of his personal and essential glory, for as God he would still stand forth arrayed in spotless holiness and complete perfection; but he would not be exalted to the throne of dominion over the redeemed host, who shall now vie forever with the angels in their notes of praise. The Church is the fullness of Christ.

But lest there might be any unholy exultation—lest any thing of credit might be arrogated by the Church, the apostle ascribes all the excellence of the Church to Christ. It is the fullness of him that filleth all in all; the very existence of the Church—its spirituality, its connection with the Redeemer, its ultimate excellence, when according to his promise, he shall "present it to himself, a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing"—all this is derived from Christ; he filleth the members of this spiritual body with all their graces. The Lamb of God prepares for himself a spouse; to her it is granted that "she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, and the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." Soon shall be heard "the voice of the great multitude as the voice of many waters and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Allelnia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." The Church shall be cherished by the Redeemer as a wife of youth. Of her he shall say, when she is received to his embrace, "Thou art all fair, my love—there is

no spot in thee." What honor thus to be united with Christ. "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church." All this love and favor is secured to the people of God because Christ is the head and they the body.

II. We have another truth taught in the text; the main instruction of the passage. It is *the superiority of Christ.* He is the head! Language more expressive of excellence could not be used. Literally interpreted, the text declares Christ's exaltation among the exalted. The head is the most honorable part of the body. It is the throne of the intellect—the home of thought. In it the organs of sense are located. It is the especial dwelling of the soul, that looks out from the guarded windows, that listens at the surrounding galleries, that holds its court within its hidden chambers, issuing thence its orders and there receiving reports from the whole system. The head as the centre of thought, gives its character to the whole being; for say what we will of the heart as the seat of the affections, and thus determining the moral qualities, yet it ever remains true, "For as a man thinketh so is he." Upon the countenance we look to determine the intellectual and moral character of the individual. The head has all authority; to the head is committed all care. This language, implying Christ's superiority, is established by many other passages of Scripture. It is said by prophecy of Christ, "I will make him my first born, higher than the kings of the earth." "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, hath raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, far above all principalities and powers and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet." The Church on earth is more precious in the sight of God the Father than any thing else the world contains—nay, than the world and all in it besides. For its sake, the blessings of Providence and grace are bestowed upon mankind. In his purposes of mercy and love towards his people, God bestows favors upon sinners who are joined with them in the relations of this life. Upon this Church shall be poured the treasures of God's glory; his power to make it holy and happy shall be exerted forever; and yet as the head of this body is Christ placed. This is to be Christ's redeemed family, this his everlasting kingdom. He shall reign by the appointment of his Father in uninterrupted dominion forever and ever. He is the Head! However intimate may be the communion of the Church with her Lord—however highly exalted she may be by this connection, in the reception of the blessings God confers upon her—she will ever be in such subjection to her Lord—she will ever be so inferior, as properly to be regarded only as the body of which he is the head.

This superior excellency of Christ consists in part in his divine nature. As when he was upon the earth wearing the outward form of humanity he was not divested of his deity, but through the veil, the glory of the Godhead would sometimes shine forth, so that that human voice seemed to carry with it the authority of Jehovah, as it healed the sick, and raised the dead, and quelled the tempest, so, in heaven, as the head of the Church, though we are assured that Christ will have a glorified body like the arisen bodies of the saints, and be known there as the elder brother of the redeemed family, yet this will not be at the expense of his divinity; this he will retain, with this he cannot part, and in this he will ever be worshipped as the Lord of angels, as well as the King of saints.

And not only thus will he be exalted, but as the Author of their salvation will all the redeemed exalt him forever. He is their Head in this respect. He contrived, he purposed, he executed, even amid sufferings, the plan of redemption. His ardent love impelled him to the sacrifice required; he stained the shameful cross with his own blood, that, thus sprinkled, it might turn aside the avenger, the angel of death; he sent the Spirit to move upon the souls of sinners and subdue their opposition to his will, to open their eyes, shut up against his beauty, and to unstop their ears, deaf to the music of his inviting voice, to renew and sanctify the soul, and to keep his chosen in the path of life unto the end. He has been ever present in the believer's experience—in every scene of his eventful life he has exercised control; in sorrow, he has been near to comfort; in temptation, to strengthen; in danger, to defend; and in death, to cheer and animate with heavenly hopes; until now safely gathered into his kingdom above, the happy spirits of the redeemed are ready to exalt him, not only as King of Heaven, but as the author of eternal life. Each shining member of that church on high, gathered at last from every nation to dwell forever at the right hand of God, looking up to him, who is there gratefully acknowledged as the Head not only of the Church, but of all principality and power, will be ready, with an emphasis which Thomas could not express, to exclaim, "My Lord and my God!" Christ shall be the glorious Head of the Church forever and ever.

III. This passage also gives us light in respect to the nature of *the present connection between Christ and his Church.* It is here represented by the connection of the head with the body. As the head is essential to the life of the body, so is Christ essential to the very existence and life of the Church. Its spiritual being has been derived from him, and for its continuance it is entirely dependent upon him. The body would not sooner lose all its powers and turn to corruption, if the head were removed, than

the Church if it should be separated from Christ. There is no state of society more analogous to the putrefaction of a dead body than that in which a form of religion prevails—in which there is the name of a church remaining, but in which all connection with Christ and all regard for a spiritual Christianity have ceased. There are about the forms of a ceremonial religion, from which all that is Christlike has departed, an unsightliness like dead men's bones, and a savor like the charnel-house. The life of the Church is in its union with Christ the head.

Nor merely existence, but all vigor, all that we call life, in distinction from inactivity and uselessness, depends upon Christ. The head gives motion to the whole frame—when it reposes in slumber, the whole frame is in repose. From the head are sent out the messages which put in action the entire system, and impel each member to its appropriate work. Such is the energizing influence of Jesus Christ, the head, upon the Church—upon each individual member. When in any period the Church has been peculiarly alive and active in its appointed sphere of labor, engaging as with one spirit in the great cause of benevolence, in building up the Redeemer's kingdom, and in doing good to men, then has Christ, the head, been sending forth throughout the whole body his invigorating influences; impelling his people forward in their holy calling; and whenever, on the contrary, the Church has been sleeping, languid, and stupid, it has been when she has separated herself from Christ, giving herself up to some other motive, and not being constrained in all things by the love of her Lord. And as it is a controlling influence that the head exerts in the human system, so is it with Christ and his Church. He, as the Head, controls and regulates all her movements, when she indeed submits to him. There are states of the human system when the determinations of the mind are not carried into execution; when the hand, for example, refuses to obey the commands of the will—when paralysis has removed from some member the power of motion. Such paralysis then, is in the Church, Christ's body, when it does not move in every limb according to the directions of its Head. This is the established connection between the Church and Christ—he controls, she submits; so it must ever be in a healthy state. She is not safe or prosperous, if she follow any other leader, or if she refuse or neglect to follow him.

This relation of Christ to his Church gives him all authority. Let his people ever inquire what Christ has said, what is Christ's will as made known in his word, rather than to yield to the dictation of the whole body, or of any earthly head. Christ Jesus is the only head of the Church. That which is not subordinate to him, which does not rule in accordance with his directions, should receive no respect from the faithful members of Christ's

body. Let the Head control, or else confusion and disaster are sure to ensue.

There is another connection of Christ with his Church here presented to our view, more impressive and interesting than any that has been mentioned. It is the connection of sympathy. How complete is the union of the whole human frame with the head. Here, because the brain is located—here because it is the centre of the nervous system—here, because it is the seat of sensation—here, is every thing felt, most acutely, that gives pleasure or pain to the remotest members. So are we taught that, in a manner to us incomprehensible, but yet real, Christ suffers with his suffering people. He is complete in his blessedness, as he sits upon the throne of Heaven. He has finished his work of atonement, yet are there trials to be endured in promoting his cause in an ungodly world—yet are there enemies to be met in this spiritual warfare—yet are there groans and sighs and tears, from which those cannot hope to escape who engage in his service; "for through much tribulation we enter into the Kingdom of God," and, "in all these afflictions he is afflicted" —so perfectly does he sympathize with his Church below. "Why persecutest thou *me*?" cried Jesus from the skies to him who was dragging the saints to prison. "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck and that he were cast into the depths of the sea." He that wounds one of the true believers of Christ, strikes a blow at the very person of the Redeemer, and this not merely in intention; he feels it who is on the highest throne of heaven. Surely the enemies of God's people know not what they do. Is not this the meaning of the Apostle when he says, in language of solemn warning, "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Did he not mean to have his foes understand that Christ would consider himself wounded in the person of his own accepted disciple? Still more plainly may he be considered as speaking on this point when he says, "I, Paul, rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the Church." It is not necessary that Christ should suffer more than he has done to complete the glorious work of redemption, but there are afflictions for his body to endure in the final conflict with Satan upon the earth—these are the afflictions of Christ, Paul, and every suffering child of God who is called to tribulation for Christ's sake,—each one is filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ. He regards them as his own, so complete is the union between the head and the body. And how sweet and comforting the language of the Bible to those who are thus wounded for him. It is declared by the prophet, "In all their afflictions he was afflicted"—"for he that toucheth you, touch-

eth the apple of his eye." How unspeakably precious does this view make the blessed Redeemer to those who can thus by faith behold him sharing with them in all their trials and pains as one with them; as the head sympathizes with the pains of every limb. Will not Christ assuredly, for his own sake, bring all this suffering to an end, and when these afflictions are filled up, according to the eternal purpose of God, make every member of his body happy and glorious with his own glory and joy in his Father's kingdom?

IV. One other distinct lesson is taught us in this passage, viz.: *the nature of the connection between the members of the Church.* It is the connection of the members of the same body. How frequently and distinctly the sacred writers present this truth: "Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular;" i. e., each one is a member of that body. "There should be no schism in the body, but the members should have the same care one for another, and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." What an intimate union must there necessarily be among those who are held together by such bonds, members of the same body, and that the body of Christ! How can there be any schism, any essential disagreement, any other separation than that which is the result of remote locality, or varying language, or climate, or habit? Will not the same life-blood pervade every limb and every member? Will not the same thought of the common and exalted head thrill each nerve? Does not the remotest member feel the power of that central will? Does not any thing, that differs from the most perfect agreement, show at least a partial separation from the body of Christ? How evident the duty, that if one member suffer, all the members shall suffer with it, or if one member be honored, all the members shall rejoice with it. Let us, as members of this body of Christ, sympathize with every suffering brother who is afflicted for righteousness' sake; let us rejoice in the spiritual prosperity and increasing holiness of every one who is advancing in the divine life, and we prove most effectually that, as members, we are joined to the one body of Christ here below, and that we are holding to "the head from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

There are two obvious reflections from this subject. 1st. It is the duty of every member of this body to yield to the instructions of the exalted Head with which it is united. It is only as one can perceive the existence, and yield to the power of a sym-

pathy with the Head, that there can be any assurance of that change which must take place in each child of earth, to fit him for the skies.

If there be not an identity of feeling and of interest—if the will of Christ be not the will of the professed believer, there is but little evidence that the union with the Head, which is necessary to constitute us members of the body of Christ, has been effected. There may be a wart or a wen upon the body which is yet no part of the body; it clings to it, but is not subject to the laws of life and health. So are there such excrescences upon the body of Christ; those who have a name to live and are dead, having no vital union with Christ—no sympathy to the Lord of glory; no correspondence of will or purpose with him who died for sinners, and who seeks to make the polluted holy; these are not members of his body, though they may cling to it to mar its beauty and impede its growth. Christ must be considered as the Head, and honored as such, by all that would have evidence of their acceptance with him. Christ must be, will be all and in all to those who are members of his mystical body; they will regard him as entirely adapted to all their wants: as such they will ever recommend him unto others.

"He is a path, if any be misled;
He is a robe, if any naked be;
If any chance to hunger, he is bread;
If any be a bondman, he can free;
If any be but weak, how strong is he;
To dead men, life he is; to sick men health;
To blind men, sight; and to the needy, wealth.
A pleasure without loss—a treasure without stealth."

The humble believer cannot find terms to express his love for Christ—his gratitude—his reverential homage; Christ is the Head. In him each saint rejoices; to him he commits his soul as unto a faithful Creator. How plain is this duty to every believer. At the same time there must be a suitable view of the dignity and honor of being a member of Christ's body. How can any one, with this thought in mind, yield to unrighteousness? "I am a member of Christ's body, of his flesh, and of his bones; my body is a temple of the Holy Ghost; I am not my own, but bought with a price, even with the precious blood of the Son of God; joined to the glorious Head, how can I consent to any thing which would cause a blush upon that cheek once given to the smiter, or a throb in those temples once pierced by the thorns. Let each disciple of Christ be mindful of his own high calling, of his exaltation, while also mindful of the superior exaltation of Christ. Let the body be cherished, while the Head is adored.

2. The other reflection has respect to the impenitent. They may learn from this subject where to look to obtain a correct view

of religion, the religion of Jesus. It is a system, like the complete framework of the human body, the dwelling-place of the soul. But as we do not look at one's hands or feet, at his limbs or chest, to obtain a view of his character, but at his head—his brow, where mind holds its throne—his face, where moral traits are shown as in a mirror—so must those who would obtain a correct view of the system of religion, look, not at the body, but at the head. This is a great mistake into which mankind are prone to fall; they look at the body of Christ, and because they detect some blemishes—for even true Christians are not yet perfect—they pronounce against it, and strengthen themselves in their unbelief and impiety. Oh, they should look on the Head! How many there are who will not admit the excellence of those who are consistent members of Christ's body, because they have occupied their field of vision with some flagrant offender—perhaps a wolf in sheep's clothing, whom they declare not to be a Christian, and yet they allow themselves to be prejudiced on this account against Christianity! But nowhere can the true view be obtained, so long as any part of the body is regarded. Even that which is most healthful and vigorous, is still imperfect, and but faintly reflects the glory of the Head. Look to Christ, ye that would know what religion is; ye that would not remain wilfully blinded against all perception of the truth. Judge not of its character and its claims upon you, by the sight of the members of Christ's body; look at the Head, and here you may see such excellence, such beauty, such perfection, that you cannot choose but love and admire. Let the world contemplate Christ, in his native glory, in his assumed humanity, in his wonderful works, in his heavenly instructions, in his unparalleled sufferings, in his resurrection and ascension to glory, in his present character as Intercessor, and in his future appearance as Judge of the world; let the world thus look at the Head instead of the body; let the Cross be seen as the central point among the habitations of sinful men, and salvation by grace through the blood of Christ be counted the great doctrine to engage the intellect and the heart; let the world thus look at the Head, instead of the body, and at once a multitude of objections to the gospel would be swept away, and the strongest hopes might be indulged that speedily the triumphs of the Cross would be celebrated, and all men be brought to bow in subjection at Jesus' feet.

But, Christian brethren, because the enemies of Christ will look at the body instead of the head, and for the very purpose of finding fault, see to it that ye do all in your power to make the body agree with the head. See that the vital union is preserved most carefully between every member and the divine Head. Let all see that each member yields in all things to the will of the invisible Head. Constrain the world to take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus. Live by faith in the Son of God.

Let it be seen that "your life is hid with Christ in God, and then when Christ, who is your life, shall appear, ye also shall appear with him in glory." Heed the apostolic injunction, that, "speaking the truth in love, you may grow up into him in all things which is the Head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

SERMON DCXC.

BY REV. JOSEPH SMITH,

GRAFTON, MASS.

CHRIST ALL.

"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcison, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all."—Col. iii. 11.

The great idea in the mind of a Jew, was his nationality. He gloried in patriotism. The glory of the Greek was wisdom. Those in bondage think, that above all things they would glory in freedom. But the christian, renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him, glories only in Christ crucified. Christ to him is ALL, and in all. Patriotism, freedom, learning and refinement, are, by no means to be lightly esteemed. But compared with the glory of the cross, they are to him only as a dim candle in the brightness of the noon-day sun, overpowered, absorbed, unseen. It accords with the genius of ancient languages, and with the ardor of the Hebrew mind, to express a superlative idea by contrast rather than comparison. The gain of the whole world, considered by itself, would be something, but contrasted with the loss of a soul, it is absolutely nothing. Freedom, civilization, learning, and, whatever appertains to us as men, or citizens, considered by themselves, are of great value, but not worthy to be named in comparison with the blessings that flow from the cross. In contrast, those are as nothing, and these are all.

The language of the text is very general, or rather, I may say, absolutely *unlimited*. Is it to be so understood? We readily grant that to the words, *all*, *every-one*, *every-where*, we are not in all instances to attach the widest possible idea. The connection and nature of the subject show evidently where the writer

did not intend these terms to be thus interpreted. But does it follow, from any just principle of interpretation, that these words are never to be understood in their widest, unlimited sense? If, in their application to men and things of time, we may be in danger of making words mean too much, are we in danger of committing the same error when words are used to express the Being, Attributes and Work of God? I take it for granted, that with our limited perception, and imperfect comprehension, the idea we receive from these words cannot transcend the magnitude of the idea which the Holy Ghost intended they should express. Nor will all that we can say equal the extent of their meaning, or the blessedness of their import, as developed in every true christian's experience. His enraptured thoughts, outrunning the tongues of the learned, and the pens of ready writers, often prompt him to exclaim in reference to this subject, "the half cannot be told."

It is worthy of remark here, that, though the language in which a thought is uttered, remains unchanged, the thought itself in our minds often grows broader, deeper, higher, and more glorious, in proportion to our increasing power of comprehension. To the mind of a little child, playing upon the beach, the word, Ocean, presents only the idea of so much of the water as he can see. To the mind of the student in the halls of learning, this word presents a greatly enlarged idea. But, to the sailor, who has crossed every ocean in every direction, the word has a meaning, of which, neither the child, nor the student can form any adequate conception. To a little child, the word, World, means the circle, of which the horizon is the circumference. To the child of riper years, World, means this great globe. Great! but how much greater would his idea be, if he had been round the globe. But to the intelligent Astronomer, whose active thoughts have not only followed the planets of the solar system in their orbits, but wandered far off to the fixed stars and contemplated them as centres and suns to other systems, the word, *World*, conveys an idea, in comparison with which, the real magnitude of this globe itself, is but as a single drop compared to the ocean. So shall maturer years, and more perfect knowledge, enlarge our idea of the truth uttered in the text, that *Christ is all, and in all.*

We invite you to consider,

I. The fact of Christ's exaltation as here asserted.

II. The evidences by which the assertion is sustained.

This language does not deny the individuality of persons and things. "All and in all," as here asserted of Christ, implies that the persons and things, in whom He dwells, are not to be considered as identical with, and parts of Himself, yet the language asserts that there is nothing in existence which is not in some way connected with Himself. If Christ be in all, the connection of all with Him must be very close and important. What is the nature of this connection? Is it that of cause and

effect; of antecedent and consequent; or that of a shadow to its substance? Is it that of an elementary principle to its illustration; or as the connection between a premise and the conclusion? Or like the relation of the stage to the scenes acted thereon? It will require the illustrations suggested by all these correlatives, and more, to convey a full idea of the nature of the connection between what is material and providential, and the spiritual wonders of the cross. From one point of view, the material universe seems like a stage, on which the successive scenes of Redemption might be acted. From another, Redemption appears like a sublime conclusion, and the creation and government of the world, like the premise and the several steps of the argument. From another point of view, Redemption as wrought out by Christ on Calvary, appears like substance, the sum and substance of all truth, and all the world besides but its shadow, or illustration. Viewed as it existed in the Eternal mind, ere the world was made or time began, Redemption appears as the great work for the development of the Divine Glory, and the creation and government of a material world, merely as subordinate contingencies. Accordingly when the material world shall have disappeared, and we, in that better land, are permitted to read a truthful history of what it once was, Christ will be seen to be all in all, not merely the Lion of one tribe or nation, but the Hero of the whole story, and Redemption by the blood of the cross, his most sublime achievement.

And I may add, this connection of all things with Christ crucified is not simply *an* important idea, in the nature of things, but *the essential* idea, the very foundation of all things created, the reason why created things are what they are. The soul of man, for illustration, cannot be all and in all in its relation to his body, without the body's having been by nature fitted for such a connection. And this fitness of the body for a connection with the soul, and to be subservient to its interests, is obviously the most important idea in the nature of the body's organization. So if Christ be all, and in all things, that arrangement in the nature of all things which fits them for this connection, is certainly the most important element of their nature. The apostle declares not simply that all things were made by Christ, but FOR HIM. Fitted in their essential nature, by infinite wisdom, for Christ, for the purposes of his kingdom, for the glory of his cross, this must forever be their most important destiny, this, the sublime mission of a created world.

When we say of one thing, that it is all and in all, in its connection with another, it is equivalent to saying that the latter exists wholly for the former, or that the latter is what it is, because the former has made it so. To be all in all of anything, is to be the essential cause of its existence, or the end for which it was made. To mark with exactness the flight of time, is all in all parts of a watch, because all parts of a watch exist, and are what they are,

for this purpose. The germ is all and in all, in a kernel of corn considered as seed, because the whole surrounding body of the seed exists for the germ. A man builds a house for himself and family. He and they are all and in all in reference to its construction and arrangement, because it was their wisdom and power which caused it to be what it is, and for them it is to be used. Their will, their pleasure and their business, furnish the true reasons for all its peculiarities. The sun is all and in all in respect to the existence and beauty of the rainbow, because it is so emphatically the cause of the rainbow. Thus Christ is all and in all, for he is the cause of all, and all things are for his use and glory in effecting the purposes of Redemption by the blood of the cross. And hence the true reason of all things must be found in this, their relation to Christ crucified. And the knowledge and acknowledgment of Christ in all things, is the first step in the path of true wisdom. Here man first learns, what he will never in this life, nor in Eternity, have occasion to unlearn. From this centre all rays of knowledge emanate, and to this all true knowledge leads. Here, if anywhere, must human wisdom and Divine meet and harmonize.

"Here hangs all human hope; this nail
Supports the falling universe: this gone, we drop;
Horror receives us, and the dismal wish,
Creation had been smothered in her birth,
That eternal darkness had been its shroud,
And chaos, its grave, undisturbed; chaos,
Less dark, less disordered and less confused,
In her primeval state, than earth disrobed
Of Calvary's light."

When by the power of the Holy Ghost, the heart is regenerated, and Christ is revealed to the eye of faith, and appreciated by the enraptured soul as ALL, and seen to be in all things, then, and not till then, does man discover the true philosophy; then and not till then, is he in any sympathy with the essential nature of things, with the laws by which they are governed, and with the ultimate design which they are to accomplish. When every created thing, animate and inanimate, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, shall be seen pointing to Calvary, and crying in reason's ear, as well as the ear of faith, "Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto the Lamb," then will they be doing the great work for which they were made, and accomplishing the purpose for which they were by nature chiefly fitted. For thy use, and pleasure, and glory, O Lamb of God! all things are, and were created. Thou art ALL! Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is nothing on earth to be desired without Thee. Thou art above all, in all, and over all, God blessed forever.

We pass to notice.

II. The evidences by which the assertion in the text is sustained.

Let it be distinctly understood that we speak, in this connection,

of *Christ crucified*, revealing by his cross the mystery of godliness, making known thereby to angels and men, the wisdom and love of God, and suggesting therein to all created intelligences, adequate reasons for all things that are, that have been and that are yet to be. And,

First, the view of Christ crucified, given in the whole of the Bible, accords with the idea presented in the text. The Bible, *as a whole*, is a revelation from God. But what does it reveal? Light? Christ is the Light of the world. Does it reveal truth? Christ is the Truth. Does it reveal the way to Heaven? Christ is the Way! Does it reveal life eternal? Christ is our Life. Christ is all, and in all the Bible. It is most emphatically the revelation of Jesus Christ. Its first lesson to fallen man, and its last, are of Christ crucified. The Old Testament, with all its histories, and prophecies, and sacrifices, simply shows what pains Christ had taken to prepare the world for the sublime wonders of his cross. The Evangelists record his teachings, and the circumstances of his death. The Acts and the Epistles record the development of his glory and the progress of his Kingdom. If the Bible be regarded as a history, then Christ crucified is the subject of that history. If it be regarded as a biography, it is the biography of Christ crucified. Is it a narrative? Christ crucified is the Hero of the story. Does it contain doctrines? They are the teachings of Christ. Is it a book of laws? Christ is the Lawgiver. Does it enforce ordinances? These are emblems of Him, who died, and rose, and became to sinners the bread of life. Does the Bible contain promises? Christ is both the substance of what is promised, and the surety that the promise shall not fail. Does it speak of the creation of the world? It was by the power of Christ. Of its government? By Him all things consist. Of its end, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the heavens be rolled together and pass away? It will be, when Christ as Redeemer has no more use for them. He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and End. Thus the Bible in all its parts, speaks the sentiment of the text, that Christ crucified is ALL.

Again, secondly, the miracles of Christ, as strongly as his word, confirm and illustrate the truth asserted in the text. The Bible, from the beginning to the end, is but the echo of his voice, who spake as never man spake. He was mighty in word; nor is He less mighty in deed. The *works* that He has done bear witness of Him that He is ALL! and indicate the subordination of all things to Himself and to the purposes of his dying love. The dead came forth from their graves at his bidding, to bear witness of Him as mighty to save. Winds and waves cease their commotion in obedience to his mandate. A fish of the sea hastens to bring Him tribute. An untutored colt obediently

bears Him in triumph to Jerusalem. A raven restrains its own appetite to feed his hungry prophet. The heavens pour down their waters, and the fountains of the great deep break up to drown his enemies. Fires descend from heaven to consume the wicked, and the earth opens her mouth to devour the rebellious. The sea retires to make a way for his chosen ones; and windows in heaven are open to give them food; and the solid rock pours out for them rivers of water. The opened eye, that was once blind, rejoices in Him who is the light. The listening ear, once deaf, is gladdened chiefly by the music of his voice. The nimble feet of the lame hasten to do his will. The withered arm is once more stretched out, and lifted up in adoration of his name; and the leper, healed, returns to give Him praise. "The Friend of sinners dies"—and earth's deep foundations shake—the parting veil, the rending rocks, the darkened sun, and a mourning, trembling world, confess the presence of their Maker, and significantly indicate for whom they had been made. Thus, fish, fowl, and animal, the ocean and the land, the solid rock and the flowing stream, the earth and the heavens, the living and the dead, yea life and death and even him who has the power of death, are subject to Christ and virtually confess that he is ALL. When Christ as our Redeemer spake and acted, He summoned the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them, as witnesses and co-operating agents, which he had prepared from the beginning for this very purpose, the highest, noblest purpose they ever answered.

Thirdly, the idea of the text is confirmed by a careful investigation of the analogies of things. Among all classes of birds, there is one of highest flight, the Eagle. Among the finny tribes of the deep, there is one of mightiest form and strength, Leviathan. Among the animals of the forest, there is one of loudest roar, the Lion. Over all the animals of earth, man was made to rule as their lord. In all forms of society, domestic, civil, and religious, there is one exalted by divine appointment above the rest; there is a highest office and an officer to fill it. In natural philosophy, one law, *Gravitation*, has an importance greater than every other idea which it developes. In moral philosophy, one idea, *Love*, seems to involve in itself every idea of the whole subject. Of all parts of our physical frames, the head is most important. Of our vital organs, the heart seems all in all. Among the faculties of the mind, none are of so great importance as conscience. Among the elements of christian experience, nothing is so important as Faith. In the heavens, one star differs from another in brightness, but the sun outshines them all. What, we ask, do these analogies teach? All things are found in climateric order, and related to each other, as lower, higher, highest. This is seen when the individuals of a single class are compared with each other; it is seen also, in comparing one en-

tire class with another. Every class, and every individual of each class, seems formed by nature, with the arm stretched out, and the finger pointed upward. But the great question is, to what object do they point? A question often asked by the worldly wise and great, and as often unanswered, or answered in such a way as to make darkness darker, and ignorance more profound. But with the Bible open and believed, easily solved by the simplest child. The Lamb of God—behold the Lamb, they cry! He is the Beginning and the End. For Him are all things. He is all, and in all; the first-born of every creature; Head over all things to the church.

Christ is called The Word. In the beginning was the Word. All language is simply a means of transferring the thoughts of one mind into another mind! When God from eternity wished to convey his thoughts to man by language, it was necessary that a language should be created. The chief end answered by what has been created, is evidently the great purpose for which it was made; and since the ideas communicated to man by Christ and of Christ, are infinitely more important than all other ideas that language ever uttered, it is not too much to say, that to answer this purpose by the analogy of its nature and the use of its terms, is the great object for which language was constructed. Thus Christ is the Word, the great idea of all language, the revealer of the counsels of eternity, and of the light of immortality. Every act of our minds in receiving ideas through the medium of language, is only a disciplinary exercise to prepare us, in a more perfect manner, to learn of Christ, the mysteries of his kingdom, and the glory of heaven. Language fails to answer its noblest end, when it utters nothing of Christ crucified, and reflects nothing of the radiance of Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the exact image of his person.

But is it in reality to Christ, the crucified one, to whom the analogies of nature point us? That God is revealed in nature's works, and seen in history, is no new thought. This is taught by Natural Theology. But is this all? To divorce the work of creation and providence from the glory of the cross, seems to be the essence of Deism, and a denial of Christianity. Carefully surveying the cross, what do we behold? Vicarious suffering. Voluntary substitution. Sorrows and death freely endured by the innocent, to save from sorrows and death, the guilty. He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and by his stripes we are healed. Here is laid the foundation of the great work of mediation. Thus Christ becomes our redemption and salvation. What are the specific analogies that point to this idea? In the nature of the family institution, ordained by God to direct our thoughts, to form and develop our characters, they are daily seen. The sleep of the sick is obtained by the agency of those who give up sleep; rest to the infant, by the

weariness of its mother; and food for the family, by the sweat of the father's brow. A Benjamin is born, but in order to give him life, a Rachel must die. A young man commences business, fails, and sinks in discouragement. But a father, or brother, or friend, comes to his relief, and by some sacrifice, takes his burden, restores his courage, and saves him. When a fatal accident is falling upon the head of those we love, quick as thought we interpose between them and the blow, and by voluntarily suffering the pain of a broken arm, we save our friend from death. This is the law of mediation. The love that prompts to deeds like these, is the very foundation of all domestic happiness. Better far that the family relations had never existed, if each does not consider it both a duty and privilege to bear the other's burden. Why were our domestic relations formed thus, but to keep in our minds, by our daily experience, correct ideas of Him by whose wounds we are made whole; whose love prompted Him to die on the cross that we might be saved from death eternal; who laid aside his robes and crown of glory and became a servant, that he might raise us to thrones, and crown us kings and priests unto God. Did the family institution ever answer a nobler purpose than thus to point to the cross, and illustrate the fundamental principle on which Christ is gathering around Himself the whole family of the redeemed in heaven and earth?

It is provided by nature's law that vegetable life must die, to give animals food; and animals must die to become food and clothing for man. Rivers of animal blood daily flow to save the life of man from starvation and death. The cattle upon a thousand hills are the Lord's, and offered in sacrifice or as common food, they are in their nature and use significant analogies of that great and glorious Being, who died that we might live. The lamb to slaughter led, by his nature, his meek submission and design, still points to Christ as clearly as when on Jewish altars slain.

It was because these analogies exist in all things, that Christ so often used things, rather than words, as illustrations of his own truth and his own works. To his eye every material thing, every law in nature, every custom of society, seemed but a metaphor, a simile, or comparison, through which his own light might be made to penetrate the darkness of the human mind. Day and night, summer and winter, seed time and harvest—the rain, the dew, winds, thunders, lightnings, the ocean, the land, the sun, moon, and stars, good seed and tares, sowing and reaping, in short, all things in nature, all events of Providence, were made to speak directly of Himself, as though the very heavens had been formed from the beginning for the glory of the Redeemer, and the earth to show forth the work of his cross.

Again, fourthly, the Holy Ghost bears witness to the truth in the text, in the experience of every one who is truly regenerated. It is one of the offices of the Holy Ghost, to take the things of

Christ and show them unto us in their true relations. "He shall take of mine," says Christ, "and show it unto you." When one is truly regenerated, he esteems Christ as very precious, the chiefest among ten thousand, altogether lovely, yea, as ALL, and in all. The love of Christ is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, and has become the leading element of his soul, *his ruling passion!* In what light do all things appear to a soul that is under the influence of love as a ruling passion? It is obviously the nature of a ruling passion, to concentrate the whole power of the soul upon a single idea, and to behold an image of that idea reflected from every object which may chance to gain the attention. When avarice becomes the ruling passion, the soul lives and moves and has its being in plans to gain wealth. Every thing means money received, or, money lost. To such a soul, the pale countenance of a dying child would be but little else than an index of pecuniary loss; and, in the dying groans of his aged father, he would hear but the signal for dividing the estate. If revenge were the ruling passion of the soul, it would see in every implement of husbandry, a weapon of death: raging winds, flashing lightnings, and rattling thunders, would be to such a one but signals for striking the fatal blow! When envy is the ruling passion of the soul, then it sees nothing in another's prosperity, but the means of disadvantage and mischief to itself. When benevolence and pity are ruling passions, then the whole world seems to have become little else, but scenes of distress and means of relief. Winds seem to echo sighs of anguish, and the thunders speak of groans which cannot be uttered; and dews and rains are but the tears which heaven weeps in sympathy with the suffering. When love becomes the ruling passion, then love and goodness seem to be the all-pervading principles of a created world. As a perfect mirror reflects a perfect likeness, so perfect love sees love reflected from every object on which it looks. The love of Christ in the heart as its ruling passion, sees the love of Christ in every shining star, and singing bird, and flowing stream, yea, in every insect as it dances in the sunbeams, and in planets and systems as they revolve in their orbits. Now it is absolutely required, both by the law and the Gospel, that love to Christ should thus be our ruling passion. The heart of man is never right until it be thus controlled. And into this state the Holy Ghost brings the soul by regeneration. Can the Christian ever forget the days of his first love to Christ, when one idea and one only seemed to fill the whole horizon of his mental vision, and of the vision of faith; and that idea was Christ crucified, to save his guilty, trembling soul? Long had he rode on the raging sea of passion and rebellion; at length a storm came on; the storm of God's justice and indignation against his sins, was loud and fearful; dark was the night of *guilt* and despair; like the foundering bark, he trembled in the

gale; and eternity, like the yawning ocean, seemed opening to receive him.

"Deep horror then his vitals froze,
Death struck, he ceased the tide to stem."

The commandment came, sin revived, and he died;

"Then suddenly one star arose,
It was the star of Bethlehem.
It was his guide, his light, his ALL."

It was, and is, and ever shall be,

"His light in darkness, and his life in death,
His hope and joy in youth, his strength in age,
His theme, his inspiration and his crown,
His world, his ALL,
His boast through time, bliss through Eternity,
Eternity too short to speak thy praise,
Or fathom thy profound of love to man."

In this state of mind, when love to Christ, the crucified one, is the ruling passion, and love is seen inscribed upon every thing animate and inanimate; and waving fields of ripening grain, and bending forests, seem to be bowing in worship of the Lamb; and singing birds and murmuring brooks, the roaring ocean, and the deep-toned thunder, seem to vie with each other, to swell the new song, and every creature in heaven and on earth seems to say, Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto the Lamb, then things appear as they really are, as they are seen by those in Heaven; for Christ is ALL, and in all.

And here I must discontinue the discussion of the subject, deeply conscious that I apprehend only a very little of what it contains, and that all I have said or can say falls infinitely below the full measure of the idea which the text declares. If any apology be necessary for selecting a subject so much beyond my ability to comprehend and develope, I will only say that even a child may be allowed to dip an urn full of water from the ocean, with which to bathe and refresh his own weary limbs, and may earnestly recommend it to others, though of the ocean's depth and extent he has no adequate idea.

In conclusion we remark,

1. That if Christ be in all things, it is our duty and privilege to be sensible of his presence. God is not in the thoughts of the wicked, and this is their state of darkness and death. Shall we also forget our Redeemer, or only think of Him as of one afar off? What must the heart of a father be, who looks upon the portrait of an absent child, and observes only the color of the paint, the beauty of the picture, or its elegant frame, but sees not the image of his child! My mother sat in the old arm chair. There she read her Bible, the old fashioned Bible, as it

lay on the stand, left her finger prints on its pages, turned down its leaves, filled it with marks, underscored its sacred words and lines, and from it turned to bless her child. The carpet was worn where she often knelt to pray—'twas there she nursed me—'twas there she died. Years intervene; again I enter that room;—there stands the old arm chair, the table, and the Bible as my mother left them. What image is before me now, in whose presence do I stand? O my mother! my mother!—whom do I seem to behold but thee. What other name can my faltering tongue find strength to utter? So when we love Christ more than a mother, He will be the one present to our view, in all the works his hands have wrought.

2. We learn from this subject, why, in preaching the gospel, great prominence must be given to the doctrines of the cross. Paul resolved, with good reason, not to know anything among the people, but Christ and Him crucified. As a minister, not less than as a Christian, he gloried in the cross. To preach the unsearchable riches of Christ was his business and his happiness. If Christ be ALL, He must so appear in our ministry, or we are untrue to our calling. It is quite possible to preach truth, historical truth, moral truth, yea, many theological truths; and yet our ministry, as a whole, may be essentially a ministry of error. Truths presented in distorted proportions and robbed of their legitimate connections, become errors. Ours will be a ministry of darkness rather than light, if Christ crucified be not prominently presented therein. The ministry should be, at least in one particular, what heaven is, the place where the light of the Lamb so shines that they need not the light of the sun. Preach Christ always, Christ everywhere—Christ all and in all, and yours must be essentially a ministry of truth.

3. Our subject suggests for what purposes all things are to be used. If Christ crucified be all, then whatever is used for Him answers the end for which it was made. All things are for Him; whatsoever the Father hath, is his. Here is the foundation of our stewardship. Freely have we received all things from Christ, faithfully must we use all things for Him. Selfishness attempts to rob the Creator, and is at war with things created. But faith, which beholds Christ in all things, works by love that consecrates all things to Him.

4. If Christ be in all things, then he who does not discover this connection is *essentially* ignorant of all things. Suppose a person to have examined the structure and motions of all the parts in a watch, and after a long investigation, should fail to discover that the watch was intended to mark the flight of time, you would not hesitate to pronounce him essentially ignorant of the whole thing. So is he essentially ignorant of the laws of nature, and of the history of the world, who fails to perceive that Christ *is in all things*, and that all things in nature and Providece near

by Him and for Him. Unbaptized Philosophy is madness. The highest style of unchristianized literature is but a darkening of counsel by words without knowledge. He who denies the true character of Christ, and disrobes the cross of its divine glory, is in double darkness. He is neither a true philosopher, nor a real Christian. He is as far from comprehending the real nature of earthly things, as from believing the revelation of heavenly things.

5. To know Christ is the end of all knowledge. This is the substance, and all earthly substances its shadow. For this Paul counted all things but loss. What is science, or art, or learning, compared with the knowledge of Christ? How dim their light, rather how entirely dark, until, as the moon reflects its borrowed light, they become radiant by the light of the cross. The greatest of the earthly great, the greatest ever born of woman, is less than the least in the kingdom of God. The humblest Christian has attained to a knowledge as much above the highest worldly wisdom, as the ideas of a Newton are above the ideas of a child. All things are so connected with the work of the cross, that if this work had failed, creation itself would have proved a *failure*. So if we fail of knowing Christ crucified, all other knowledge will be in vain, yea worse than in vain, working death unto death.

Finally, would you realize on earth what Heaven is, you must learn to sing of Him and to Him who is all and in all. To Him in that world of light, every eye is turned. He is the subject of every song, the substance and centre of every thought. There is no night there, and they need not the light of the sun, for the Lamb is their light. There is no temple there, for the Lord God, the Lamb is their temple. Christian, have you not sometimes been so absorbed in thoughts of Jesus' dying love, so lost in wonder and joy, in view of his amazing grace, that you became quite unconscious of the presence of material things, hardly knowing whether in the body or out of the body? To you in such a state of mind, prisons would palaces prove, and December would be as pleasant as May. Then to you there was no night, no sun, no temple, because Christ was your all! In such a frame as this your eternal life, your heaven, begins below. In such a frame, may it be prolonged, and perfected.

"The lame man which was healed held Peter and John."—Acts iii. 13.

How perfectly natural and picturesque are the narratives of the Bible; serving at once to vouch for their truth, and to leave their representations fixed in the memory.

The circumstance is too simple, striking, and touching, to be

overlooked. The poor man had been lame from his mother's womb, and was placed daily at the beautiful gate of the Temple, to ask alms of the worshipers. Of silver and gold, Peter and John had none; but they gave him something far better. In the name of the Lord Jesus, said they, rise up and walk. And immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he, leaping up, stood, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. The people, also, seeing what was done, hastened to Solomon's porch, greatly wondering. But the man that was healed, held Peter and John.

Was this the effect of apprehension? Did he imagine their influence was confined to their bodily presence, and that if he let them go, his lameness would return?

Or did this result from a wish to point them out to the multitude? "Are you looking after the wonderful men who have made you whole?" Eager and proud to proclaim them—"Here," says he, "here they are—these are they."

Was it not still more the expression of attachment? "O my deliverers and benefactors, let me attend upon you, and enjoy the happiness to serve you. Entreat me not to leave you, nor to return from following after you. Let me live—let me die with you." So it is in our spiritual cures. It is natural to feel a regard for those who have been the means of our recovery, and to keep hold of them. But let us remember, we may hold them too closely. And we do so, if we suffer them to draw us away from the God of all grace. For whoever are the instruments of doing us good, He is the agent, and he will have us know, that the excellence of the power is of Him, and not of them. Hence the reproof: "For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who, then, is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as God gave to every man? I have planted; Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So, then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." They are something in the order of means, and a proper respect is due to them in this character; but they are nothing as to efficiency and success—these are entirely of God; and his glory will he not give to another. To idolize a minister is the way to have him removed from us, or rendered unprofitable to us—"not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." We can never honor God so much as by dependence upon him. And them that honor him, he will honor; and they that despise him shall be lightly esteemed.—*Happy Home.*

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THE FAMILY INSTITUTION—ITS SACREDNESS AND SIGNIFICANCE.

"At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people."—JEREMIAH xxxi. 1.

YEARS, and even ages, were to intervene between the utterance of this promise by the lips of the prophet and its actual fulfillment in the times of the restoration of the Jews from their captivity. Meanwhile they were to pass through great and violent changes and commotions which threatened their existence as a people. Yet, upon their return, the arrangement of the nation into families would be found entirely unaffected. And this thought, suggested by the text, is exceedingly note-worthy, and is found, too, universal in its bearings—that, however society may be rent by sudden and long-extended revolutions, seeming to reach to its very foundations, and producing chaos which only the hand of God can reduce to order, the family institution remains permanent, the immovable basis upon which all others are built. In our own times we have an illustration the most remarkable in man's history, where in the French nation over the Church swept destroying storms, and all civil government lay prostrate, but against all the attempts of evil men, "the family"

remained as a munition of rocks, upon which the government and the church are reared again, essentially unchanged. In this promise, too, God not only recognizes the permanence and importance of the family, but presents Himself under an aspect peculiarly attractive. He had from the first been the *national* God of the Jews, enthroned in clouds and darkness, shining forth to the worshipers from between the cherubim, and displaying His wrath against His enemies. But they have been afflicted, and return stricken and feeble to their land, and now he is the *household* God, coming as an inhabitant under the lowly roof, and throwing the light of His glory around all that circle with whom He has condescended to associate. For we cannot believe the promise has reference only to the families of Israel collectively, or to those families in the large sense, that is, the *clans*, somewhat smaller than the tribes; the preceding clause would teach otherwise, for, "Behold, saith the Lord, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tent, and have mercy on his dwelling-places, and out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry. I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small." Neither need we scruple to interpret this word in its fullest significance, as we remember that he who brought down to man the thoughts of the heart of God, and who sanctified human dwelling-places by His presence, said, "If any man will keep my word, my Father will love him, and we will come and take up our abode with him." This great promise belongs to the church, and to the church of all times, for God does not recede in his purposes of grace, and God is now an inhabitant of the Christian house, claiming to regulate its affairs, guarding its interests, providing daily bread for its members, comforting in sorrow, and when death dissolves the consecrated community gathering it again in fairer realms.

This is the true ideal of the human family—that God is in it, the Sovereign, the Guardian, the Friend, the common bond of union; that it confesses His presence and recognizes His claims; that to Him each day the hearts of all go up in thankfulness, and the *thank-offering* also be rendered. This is the promise, which shall be fulfilled in the approaching era of gladness and long-expected reign of Christ, when, in the countless habitations of cities and villages, altars of thank-offering shall be reared as in temples to God, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Believing that false estimates of this institution must be productive of lasting and fatal injury, and that such estimates most widely prevail, we shall ask your prayerful attention to some considerations which may serve to correct them. And to the end that each member of the family may discern his personal obligations in guarding and promoting household religion, we shall speak, in the first place, of the sacredness of the institution, and secondly, of its design under the divine government.

I. The sacredness of the family as a *divine institution*. It is the oldest of all earthly institutions, older than the church or the state, or even than the Sabbath, which "was made for man," and not man for it. The materials of creation finished, there in the formation of the first family in Eden, history, properly speaking, began. Imposing and significant was that first marriage ceremony, in which Adam must for a time return to unconsciousness, to the image of death from which he is raised to a new life, to new and strange relations, which, by a striking sign—even by a miracle wrought—are ordained to be permanent. The soul of the first man understood the meaning of God, when he said, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh." It was the confession for all times, that separation would be as unnatural as it would be profane. And it also, you will recollect, allowed no cruelty, no misfortune, no external disgrace, not even insanity, to be a sufficient ground in the sight of God for divorce, signifying that it were better great calamities and wrongs should be suffered in single instances than that mankind should come to regard lightly the bonds of a divinely appointed institution. If we enter then the human household, and look upon it even in the light of nature, it is seen to be a kingdom ordained of God, with its own laws, interests, and responsibilities; in the earliest times, its patriarch, the eldest born, being its ruler and priest, to whom disobedience was a crime. But, in the light of revelation, is it seen a kingdom of such importance in the divine economy, that the King of heaven comes down to issue regulations for its administration. He leaves the state mainly to make its own laws, but He takes every member of the family under His own supervision, from the master of the house to the servant, and even the dumb animal that serves; the husband, the wife, the children, the man-servant, and maid-servant, and the cattle, whose treatment is also seen to have a mighty influence on the moral character of the whole household. In relation to all these, God as Governor of the world issues special edicts, and not only general principles of action but the minutest directions. And it was because He, who does nothing in vain, knew what the family was, and its indestructible influence for weal or woe upon every other relation of life, and would impress upon us that this institution was not an institution of man. Probably most of us could be astonished at the vast collection of laws for the family which would be made from the word of God, which is a statute for the household. And continually, as Christianity extends its influence, does the family become more sacred, and a grandeur is seen to invest it to which we are blind, only because sin has blinded us to all the real grandeur of life, and contracted our views to what is only paltry and sensual. Christianity will yet bring forth this holy institution, so long neglected, degraded, perverted, and debased, to its true position. Already the light is glimmering upon

some minds, and already is it seen, that with increase of knowledge and with moral elevation, the members of the household are bound in closer bonds, and that each member falling into his proper position is necessary to complete a symmetry of God's own devising. To every believer the family of the Christian ought to be sacred, because God has declared its members holy, and has ordered the sacred seal of baptism to be set upon them, even upon the infant, including all in one covenant of grace, and allowing the parent to exercise faith, and to plead promises for the child. And no Christian ought to forget that Jesus Christ was a member of the human family, and that His infant smile once answered to a mother's, as nature was weaving around Him the mysterious household ties, and that he knew filial reverence and brotherly affection. Neither when His soul expanded with the mighty thoughts of his mission, nor when the God-head shone out with power, nor when the earth was reeling under the great expiation for sin were those ties lessened. Looking down from the cross He sees His mother weeping, and near her the beloved disciple, and the affection of a son still speaks from amid the agonies of death, "Woman, behold thy son!" and to his disciple, "Behold thy mother!" and thus in the life of Jesus, which is the example for all generations, do we find proof that the family should be perpetual, and thus also forever in the eyes of the believer is the family consecrated.

There are also mysterious and unexplained bonds which unite the human family, and the oldest tragedies in the world are founded upon the dark woes of a household, scattered and suffering for the crime of one of its members. Everywhere the avenging power is upon their track. Ignorant of one another, even of their relationship, and flying from refuge to refuge, a relentless fate shuts them up to a common and terrible destiny. Even the darkened heathen mind in distant ages could see that families are bound by ties stronger than interest or affection, and with shuddering could see how a crime sent mysteriously its fatal influence through them all like the stroke of an axe through all the leaves and branches of the same tree, or, as a desecration polluted the whole temple, which from thenceforth was devoted to destruction. There was none to tell him the great lesson made known to us why death so relentlessly pursues us all, because we are the family of man. "By one *man* sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all *men* for that all have sinned;" neither for him was there any sanctuary from the destroying and invisible power.

The blindest can see that physical, intellectual and moral qualities come down in the family; the family resemblance reaching to the very soul, and the results of evil actions and of good ones descending to the third and fourth generations. God *visits the* iniquities of the fathers on the children, and when

Dathan and Abiram sinned, their wives and children, standing with them in the doors of their tents, are seen to descend alive with their fathers into the abyss. But we also behold Noah entering with his house into the ark: we can see that God meant the strange family bond for good.

These bonds of the family are more than imaginary; they are grounds of imputation. They belong to us as "fearfully and wonderfully made;" and as death visits the household, and a parent, a brother, a sister, or a child falls and is borne to the tomb, the souls of them that remain mourn in the depths of their nature as if a part of their very life were taken away. Human institutions, however carefully erected, though consecrated by oaths solemnly taken, and imposing ceremonies, yet reach no farther than interest or, at best, sentiment; but God's institutions reach to the very life of man, and take hold of his spiritual nature.

Thus has God set off every family from all other families, and given to it in all lands a seclusion, and a seclusion the more sacred as His word obtains a power the more sacred over the heart. The important reasons of this seclusion we shall see as we come to the second part of our discourse; but there is another thought connected with the sacredness of the institution which we cannot pass by. It is, that God has made the human family the *symbol of heaven* and of heavenly things. And so generally is this the case, that, were infidelity to succeed in its miserable attempt to break up the household, a vast portion of the word of God would become unintelligible, and all the best portions of our knowledge and highest conceptions of spiritual things would disappear. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh," nature itself has our modern reformers in derision, as they attempt to stir, and upheave, and re-arrange the pillars of this mighty government of God, in which it is the wisdom and the blessedness of ignorant man to take refuge as a bird in its mountain. How without the family could we comprehend God as a Father? The Parable of the Prodigal Son would be forever lost to us, and the Spirit of Adoption and our Father's House would become to us sounds of unknown significance. The life of Jesus would be as worthless to us as a myth to be swept into the rubbish of the past, for we could no longer comprehend the beauty of its pervading spirit of love, nor imitate His acts of fraternal and child-like affection. It is by the family that we understand the relations of the church to Christ as the Bride of the Lamb, and the Church as the mother of us all, by whom we are nourished and nurtured for a higher life, or the relations the redeemed are to sustain unto each other as they dwell in the "many mansions" and eat bread with the Elder Brother. But what a sanctity does the employment of the family images for such a purpose throw around this institution on which we are prone to look so slight-

ingly. Taken for the service of the temple, "Holiness to the Lord" is written upon it. Having its origin in the dawnings of time, it has through all ages been a shadow of spiritual and heavenly realities—a reflection in these turbid waters of the light of our distant home. Ah! Christian parent, it was not when the stranger died that you looked from the symbol to the reality. It was when your child left you, you saw the mute beckonings of the young spirit as it was ascending to a Father's bosom, and to dwell with its kindred; then only you found consolation in the thought that this is the shadow that passeth away, but the substance abideth forever.

From what we have said it is evident that the family can be no otherwise than an institution of vast influence and power in the world. However simple its organization or limited its resources, there are in it so much of the wisdom and authority of God, that we can only cease to regard it with awe when we have lost all reverence for Him, or respect for His purposes, or fear of His judgments.

II. But we must now proceed to inquire, "What is the *design* of the Family institution in the divine economy?

Temporal though it be in its nature, yet the briefest observation will show us its most intimate connection with the eternal, its solemn bearing upon all that goes to make up our life in this world and the next—the divinely appointed habitation in which the young and ignorant spirit finds a temporal home. Unconscious as yet of its origin or destiny, of its capacities, of duty, of danger, coming an entire stranger into the universe it is never again to leave; it here derives its first impressions (which give a coloring to all others). It finds its ideas of what life is, or what is its end, where it meets the true or pretended guides which lead it onward or send it forth with instructions upon its endless journey. *The family is the nursery of all those affections*, the regulation and exercise of which is in all after-life to constitute the happiness or wretchedness of their possessor. Here it is, if ever, the basis is to be laid in parental authority for reverence and the spirit of submission; in parental truth for faith; in parental affection for filial love. We may best conceive how much we owe to the family in the development of the social affections by bringing before us a complete household, modelled and conducted according to the divine command. The father, remembering that he is the representative of God and therefore careful to mingle his commands with affection, to see that they are founded in perfect righteousness and that therefore they are always obeyed. The mother, ever conscious that God has made her the representative of the church, and taking for her guidance the law of her God. And both looking up to Him who "giveth wisdom," and consecrating their children to holi-

ness, would be sure of the return of reverential, affectionate, and trustful hearts. If affliction come, all their sons and daughters would rise up to comfort them; if disease—if poverty—enter as an "armed man," filial love would protect them as the shield of the mighty. When old age comes on, no neglect from ungrateful children would dishonor their "crown of glory," as leaning on the strong arm of manhood they would go down to rest in the grave. The moral effect of such a life no mind can estimate, or the value of such an education just when it is possible in the life of the soul, when it is to be decided what affections shall predominate, when the foundations are laid to which the building must conform. In such a family rise up the brotherly affections and their accompaniments, self-denial and mutual assistance, compassion for the sick, tenderness for the weak, sense of mutual rights, obedience to law among equals and for inferiors. In a word, all those characteristics which fit man for life in the world are here developed, and for this end the family is instituted. Qualities, which in individual men have awed or charmed the world, are traceable back to the family; and the greatest men the world has known, have confessed that to a father's or a mother's teaching they owed the impulse which sent them onward. The man's life as a citizen of this world will be mainly shaped by the influences of home. The orderly citizen most generally has come from the orderly home; the law-breaker from the lawless household. Go into the state prison and you will find it so; and hundreds, with one voice, will tell you in effect, "I was never in my home inspired with one high or true conception of life. My father never seemed to think of my futurity, or to know any responsibility. My mother lived for show and dress and vanity, and never imparted to me one lofty guiding thought. Without an idea of government I was sent into the world, and only by the stern, harsh, soulless edicts and penalties of the civil State am I educated for time and eternity. I had no home, or my home was like a hell." Thus does every family send out its representatives into the world to tell its secrets. But a truth of far greater importance is that in the design of God the *Family is the nursery of the Church.* Whether in the case of Abraham, the Family and the Church being one, God designed to lay down a great principle we need not now inquire; but that He afterwards taught the intimate connection of the two institutions is sufficiently evident, for He not only ordained the rite of circumcision and baptism to the household, but He solemnly enjoined upon His people to teach to their households, and especially to their children, the great truths held by the church, and to impress upon their minds its principles. "Thou shalt teach these things diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way; when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Train up

your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The Christian family is holy. It is itself a miniature church, to which promises are made, yea, with which God enters into covenant, where praises are rendered, and the brotherly love, which afterward finds a field for exercise in the church at large, originates and is cultured. All the qualities which go to make one a useful or a useless member of the House of God, are developed in the family. On the one hand, benevolence, sympathy for suffering, gentleness, love for God's works of Nature, enlarged views of the world; or, on the other, covetousness, fear of poverty, ignorance of the wants of a great suffering world. It is of vast importance that Christian parents should understand that they are appointed by God to bring up, to educate their children as members of the Church of Christ; that in their own hearts they are to keep that thought uppermost in all their discipline, remembering that in this great work they have the promised aid of God. And until they act upon this thought, they have done nothing of real value for their child. And the question often recurring to every Christian parent should be, not what is this child to be, as a member of society, but what is he to be in the church of Jesus Christ. Am I shaping his views in accordance with a calling so high and glorious, in accordance with the movings of Providence, and the signs of the times! We do not mean to assert that the parent can *convert* the child, but that he should train him up in the *expectation* of his conversion; should seek to develop those traits of character which make the useful *Christian;* should chisel the marble into shape, although he cannot give life. Let him act in faith, and the law of the kingdom is that life shall come.

But there is another truth to which we have already alluded, but which rises transcendent in magnitude, and in whose shadows we may well sit trembling—the *family is the nursery for eternity.* There is indeed one redeeming power beyond it, and that is the Church, and blessed be God! it has reclaimed thousands who have gone forth from Godless homes. But what are these to the millions who, under the power of a mighty and perverted law, are hurried from the habitations of men to the habitations of the lost. You are educating forever, ye parents, those immortal spirits whose emotions are seen in smiles or tears. They are *spirits*, oh! my hearer, that look forth upon you from their earthly house—that have mysteriously come to your dwelling as a home—that have entwined themselves around your hearts—that cling to you to guide them into rest. If you are wise, you will make no impress there without prayer for heavenly wisdom. We look forward into the eternal world, and behold a human spirit, who for ages has stood before the throne of God; and yet, amid the glory that envelopes him, we see the likeness he bore on earth. The powers that have become vast, are those which began to

move in the human family; reverence, trust, *all* found nutriment there; and the poor teachings of the earthly home are deathless, because they were imparted to a living soul. Neither will the fires of hell eradicate the impress of the family influence; but still the lost soul will carry the family likeness; will trace back its emotions, its spirit of disobedience, its irreverence to that home of earth, where the prayerless parent baptized it for despair, and taught it to forsake the house of God, to live without prayer, to love gold, and to seek for rest in the honors of the fading world.

We can clearly see from this why God has secluded families and divided the earth into households. It is that we may definitely look upon the Family by itself as His institution, and that by countless instances He may show its power for good and for evil, and by terrible or encouraging examples and results of good or evil training. All over the earth and for thousands of years sending His mercy to the families that kept His commands, He has taught mankind, pouring out His fury on the families that called not on His name. Another reason equally important is seen for this separation of households, that each may for itself uncontrolled by others decide on obedience or disobedience. Thus God sets forth families, that wickedness may not be perpetual, that the curse may be cut off as the new household is formed after righteousness, but that continually the sources of influence may be new. That instinctive fear the Christian parent feels, lest the child should be contaminated with the world, is implanted by God, and accords with the divine design. It is that his family may be kept holy and become a centre of holy influence, that each like Abraham may with his household be separate from the godless and worldly, except to do them good; that here the voice of instruction may be heard; and here, and not among strangers, the training of the child for time and eternity may go on.

In this discourse, my friends, I have felt, and I think you have, that we have been wandering in an ideal world; and as we look at the real conduct of most human families we are ready to ask, were not the instructions of the Bible upon the Family given for some other race? Alas! how has sin defaced all the beautiful things of God, and strewn the earth with broken fragments of the house of divine symmetry and proportion! Here and there the fair household virtues shine forth in this night of sin but separate, save as the Gospel has united them from the heavenly. My brethren, if we saw the Family in the light of revelation, we should look with the same horror upon the prayerless house, as we now do on a desecrated temple of God. Upon it we should see resting the frown of an incensed Deity, and awaiting it and all its unhappy inmates a doom over which human tragedy may not presume to utter its wail. The prayerless house is a doomed

temple. It must fall in pieces, and fire will waste it, and desolating winds scatter its dust.

In the light of the truths we have considered, we see whence come the wide-spread and desolating evils under which the nations, and our own with others, is called to mourn, and where is to be applied the heaven-appointed remedy. The godly citizen must come from the godly household; and as well might we hope to build a goodly vessel from the rough unhewn timber of the forest, as an orderly, righteous nation from the families in which disorder reigns, that fear not God, and disregard His commandments. Vain are all civil laws—vain as for the farmer to sow his seed after the seed-time has gone by—vain all civil penalties—vain as the pruning axe to change the nature of the tree. For God's institutions there can be no substitute; for the disregard of them no remedy. For six thousands years the world has striven to prosper without them; but there has been no peace—there shall be none to the wicked. Kingdom after kingdom has striven to allay human disorders, and then gone down into darkness; codes of laws, in every line of which justice appeared, have appealed to the moral sense; but still the man-slayer in all lands has shed the blood of his victim; and the thief has stealthily crept through the darkness, and the prisons have been crowded with the shameless and the hardened. There *can be no peace* until God becomes the *household* Deity, and His name and truth enter into the earliest associations of the soul. Thank God, my hearer, if you awoke into life in such a home, where, from lips now perhaps silent in death, you heard, even as the light of life was dawning around you, messages from your infinite Father—a home in which the word of God was the central light and glory, where the morning and evening prayer was uttered; and voices sang the praises to be perfected in heaven. Happy the man who, from the vexations, turmoils and disappointments of this life, can look back upon such a home, and especially to that which such a home foreshadows. The great Napoleon, upon his desolate isle, stood firm as the rock under his feet against the storms that beat upon him, until he spake of his early home and thoughts of his mother came; then the wondrous movements of his history, and the magnificent empire he had gained and lost, and great thoughts that had borne him up, passed away from his memory. The voice that had commanded kings and armies was broken, as with head bowed down he cried, "Oh! for my home, my mother!" Ah! had he not learned that earthly and filial love pointed to a higher? and that earthly home, forever vanished, was designed by God to be a shadow of a heavenly? Is it necessary, my hearers, to add another word to impress upon all present their responsibilities? It is natural to desire power, and God has set you over a kingdom whose interests far outweigh those of any *mere* external empire on the face of the earth. For the misrule

of kings and the social disorders they have occasioned, He will hold them responsible. For the disorders and godlessness, the lax morality and failure of instruction and false instructions of the family, if such prevail, and the transmission of these to other generations, the King of kings will also summon you to a solemn reckoning. Look upon the household over which he has set you! Are you ready to answer to your Judge, to Him who hath said, "He that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." And has your household no claims upon you? You have brought to it a heritage of sin and sorrow. Oh! ere you lie down in the dust, gather a treasure of many prayers and kind instructions, pious examples and hallowed memories, that you may leave to them a heritage when you go "the way you shall never return." May God bless His truth to your souls. Amen.

HYMN.

Come at the morning hour,
  Come, let us kneel and pray;
Prayer is the Christian pilgrim's staff
  To walk with God all day.

At noon, beneath the Rock
  Of Ages, rest and pray;
Sweet is that shelter from the sun
  In the weary heat of day.

At evening, in thy home,
  Around its altar, pray;
And finding there the house of God,
  With heaven then close the day.

When midnight vails our eyes,
  O, it is sweet to say,
I sleep, but my heart waketh, Lord!
  With Thee to watch and pray.

—Briggs' Coll.

SERMON DCXCII.

BY REV. E. F. ROCKWELL,

PROF. OF LATIN IN DAVIDSON COLLEGE, N. C.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

"And if Christ be not raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."—1 Cor. xv. 17.

The death of Christ is the great central fact in the history of the world. To this the saints of old, for the space of four thousand years, looked forward, through the dim shadows of rites and offerings. For this Lamb slain in the purpose of God, Prophets, priests and kings waited long, and died without the sight. To him hanging on the cross as a sacrifice for sin, have all believers since that day looked back for comfort and peace. As the Sun is the centre of the universe, so the Cross of Christ is the centre to which the hearts of all men that would attain blessedness must be directed. All the ends of the earth, and all ages of times, must look unto him for salvation. No historical fact since the world began can have the importance of this; or needs more certain proof than this, whether Christ not only died, but rose again. No question can be raised that involves the interests of a greater number of persons, or for a longer time: for, as he is the only Saviour, if he be not raised, our faith in him is ineffectual and we are still in our sins.

I. Christ undoubtedly died on the cross. Matthew simply says, "He yielded up the Ghost." Mark informs us that when Joseph of Arimathea begged the body for interment, Pilate first received information from the centurian on the point before he granted the request. And John testifies that when the soldiers, to hasten the death of the criminals, brake their legs, finding Christ already dead, refrained from that, but one of them thrust his spear into his side, and blood and water flowed out. And after this Joseph preferred his request for the body. There could be no room for collusion or deception;—Pilate, and the centurian, and the Roman soldier, whose trade was blood, and who took so much pains to be assured of the fact, could not be mistaken. Divine Providence secured the proof of this against all cavil, and at the same time fulfilled the prophecy, that "a bone of him should not be broken."—"And he that saw it bare record; and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true." The witness John knew the importance of this fact.

II. The dead body was laid in the tomb of Joseph, "a rich man," "a good man and just," "an honorable counsellor," by himself and Nicodemus, another rich man and counsellor, not open friends of the Saviour. His own disciples had no hand in his pious act of rendering the last honors to the body of the Redeemer. But though he died with the wicked, with the rich was his burial.

III. This was a new tomb, hewn out of solid rock, and in which no other body had been deposited.

This is a matter that requires more prominence than is commonly given to it. There could be no collusion—no substitution of any other body.

John employs two negatives in speaking on this point; literally, "in which no man had never been laid." But Luke asserts still stronger by *three;* one of which denies of the fact, another of the time, and the third of the person—"where had not been laid, at no time, no person"—all of which in Greek strengthen the negatives.

The latter witness seems to have known and felt that much depended on this.

Tombs of this kind remain at this day about Jerusalem cut out of the solid rock.

IV. This tomb was closed up by a door of solid rock, sealed up by authority, and a guard of Roman soldiers detailed to watch it.

These precautions were taken at the instance of the Chief Priests and Pharisees, to prevent any pretence of a Resurrection: "they made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch." And of course they knew that the body, about which they had so much concern, was in the tomb. And their words and actions prove that they knew that the whole matter at issue between him and them was now to be decided.

But as Providence directed, these precautions authenticated and established the Resurrection: for on the third day, according to the time before appointed, the body was missing. There was no access to it any other way than by the door, which was closed by a rock, sealed by the governor, and watched by some say sixty soldiers.

But, to the confusion of those who had compassed his death, the body was gone Sabbath morning. All parties testify to this fact. The women who hastened to the tomb very early in the morning. The disciples who also went. The soldiers on guard reported the body missing, and how can its absence be accounted for? There are only four suppositions possible.

1. That the soldiers of the guard removed it. But they are not charged with this gross disregard of duty. They had no

motive for it. They were Romans—placed there by the highest authority in the Province. They saw the seal, and if they broke it they must suffer death; military discipline was very severe. They had nothing to gain, and everything to lose, and they could not be guilty of such an act. They would incur the enmity of the great body of the Jews and of the Roman government.

2. That the Chief Priests and Pharisees caused its withdrawal. But they had caused his death, and in case of any pretence of a Resurrection it was their interest to show the dead body where it was laid. They would not and could not do the very thing that they took so much pains to prevent; and there was no place so safe to keep it as this tomb.

3. That the disciples removed it. But first, they had not courage to encounter a whole company of soldiers. When he was arrested, "they all forsook him and fled."

Secondly. They did not expect his Resurrection, and had no motive to remove the body. When Christ predicted his own death and Resurrection, "they understood not that saying," being still blinded by their views of a temporal kingdom, which continued till the day of his ascension. And on another occasion, when he had spoken of rising from the dead, "they questioned one with another what that could mean."

Thirdly. When the two Marys had been to the tomb, and had seen the angel who told them of the Resurrection, the Apostles did not believe their report. "Their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." And Thomas, who was not present at first, was so incredulous that it required the strongest kind of proof to convince him.

Fourthly. The state in which the grave clothes were found shows that the body was not stolen. They were wrapped up in order, as by one perfectly quiet and without indecent haste.

Fifthly. The body was honorably buried by a friend, in a new tomb, and abundant preparations made—a hundred pounds of myrrh and spices for embalming it—and there was no conceivable motive to remove it except to fulfill prophecy; and "as yet they knew not the Scripture that he must rise again from the dead."

4. No other supposition remains but that the body was removed without hands. He, by his own power, burst the gates of the grave, and took up that life that he had laid down. This would be the necessary consequence had no one seen him afterwards—had he immediately, on that Sabbath morning, ascended to Heaven without manifesting himself to men. But the angels that appeared to the women declared that he "*was risen.*" Mary Magdalen first saw him. Two other disciples, as they walked and went into the country, saw him next, "*in another form,*" with a different dress or a changed countenance. Afterward he appeared to the eleven as they sat at meat, and "did eat before them."

On another occasion, at the Sea of Galilee, "he showed himself unto them." Paul informs us that he was seen by above five hundred brethren at once, which was probably on the mountain in Galilee, where he had appointed to meet them.

And so, after eating and drinking and familiarly conversing with his disciples for forty days, and appearing to none else, he ascended to Heaven in the sight of them all. After his ascension he appeared, first,

To the Martyr Stephen, "standing at the right hand of God." He appeared to Paul on the way to Damascus, "as to one born out of due time," who refers often to this fact as important—"that he had seen the Lord" after his Resurrection. Christ told him that he appeared to him for this purpose—to make him a witness. John had a sublime vision of his person in the first chapter of Revelations. It is believed by many that Pontius Pilate sent an account of the death and Resurrection of Christ to Tiberius, the Emperor; and this is in itself highly probable.

We have the experience of numerous saints who have felt and borne their testimony to the power of his Resurrection; who know that they have not believed a cunningly devised fable. They have trusted in him as a living Saviour, and have not been put to shame. This inward persuasion cometh not from faith in a falsehood, but by belief of the truth. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."

And though other persons saw the Saviour repeatedly after his Resurrection, the eleven disciples were the chosen witnesses to testify concerning it to the world through all ages. And as so much is depending on their testimony, we may examine a little into their character. We may say that a competent witness must have *three* qualifications: 1. Capacity. 2. Opportunity. 3. Integrity.

1. Then, the disciples were capable of observing and judging of facts. Though "ignorant and unlearned men" in some things, yet their being men of plain common sense does not militate against their testimony, or disqualify them for witnesses. There was no defect alleged in respect to their bodily senses or mental faculties. And that they were not too credulous, we see in the case of Thomas' unwillingness to believe in the Resurrection of Christ without ocular demonstration, and in their slowness to admit the report of the women, that the Lord had indeed risen from the dead. Though warned beforehand, they do not catch at the tidings as something they were just waiting to hear. They were probably as much amazed to hear of his Resurrection as the Scribes and Pharisees. And when Christ appeared to them, he "upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart; because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen."

2. They had abundant opportunity to witness that about which they were to bear testimony. It was not done in a corner; it was not some ghost—an illusion of the senses—something seen only once, and in the dimness of twilight, or in the darkness of midnight. They had been in familiar intimacy with their Master for three years, constituting his family, witnessing his actions in various circumstances. They were the very ones best qualified to prove his identity, "who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead"—who saw the scars of the nails in his hands and feet, and touched his wounded side; who declare "what they have heard, what they have seen with their eyes,* what they have looked upon, and their hands have handled;" who lay great stress on the fact that they had personal knowledge,

1. By sense of hearing.
2. By sense of sight.
3. By sense of touch.

Just as Christ directed them—"*Behold* my hands and my feet that it is I, myself; *handle* me and *see:* for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye *see* me have." And then to give them full confirmation, took a fish and honey comb and ate before them. "To whom he showed himself alive after his passion, *by many infallible proofs*, being seen of them forty days," proving to them that he had a real body of flesh and bones, by his eating, drinking, walking and conversing with them; and not the shadow, or appearance of one, as the Docetæ afterwards taught. His body had not undergone its final transformation into its glorified form, as seen by the beloved disciple in the first chapter of Revelation. And when the Apostles supplied the place of Judas, the great qualification to fill the office was that the person was one who had been in their company all the time that the Lord went in and out among them, "unto that same day that he was taken up from them," and who had had an opportunity to see all that had occurred in that time. The Apostles made this the great point of their preaching—that God had raised up Christ and exalted him to be a prince and a Saviour; the great object for which Christ had called and trained them, to be his witnesses to all nations.

And if it be objected, as it is by infidels, that he did not show himself openly to all the people—to his foes, as well as to his friends—to those who put him to death, as well as to his disciples—it may be said, first, that he had done enough to satisfy the unbelieving Scribes and Pharisees, and it was useless to give them further proof. They, as a nation, had rejected him. They

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"* The Greek terms are Luke i. 2, αυτοπται and 2 Peter i. 16, εποπται, eye-witnesses. To see with the eyes" is not pleonastic, but "intimates the certainty of the perception."—*Winer's Idioms*, Sec. 67.

knew of the fact of his Resurrection in various ways: from the report of the guard, and from the declarations of other witnesses, and from the circumstances of the case. He had before given them the sign of Jonas, the Prophet. And if he had appeared openly, they would have sought his death again, just as they did Lazarus': hence, he appointed a public meeting for his disciples in Galilee. And, besides, if he had, how would they all know? It would depend at last on the testimony of the disciples to prove his personal identity; so that he took the wisest course—to qualify twelve men to stand before the world as his witnesses, and to rest the whole burden upon them, with the aid of the Holy Spirit and his promised presence; and if it be said that a delusion was practised on the senses of the whole number, twelve, and all the others who saw him, both the women and the five hundred whom Paul mentions, to some of whom he appeals as still alive twenty years after, then no one can credit his senses, and there is an end of human testimony. But

> "He showed himself alive to chosen witnesses,
> By proofs so strong that the most slow assenting
> Had not a scruple left. This being done,
> He mounted up to Heaven."

Matthias having been in the company of Christ and the Apostles all the time of his public ministry, was specially prepared beforehand for a witness, and was as much an original witness as any of the others. (Acts i. 21, 22.) And it is worthy of remark here that twelve is the number adopted for jurymen throughout the civilized world.

3. They related faithfully what they had witnessed; we can put confidence in their integrity.

1. They gave their testimony there on the spot, and when the transactions were recent, and where they could easily be convicted of falsehood, if guilty of it, and by those strongly interested to do so; why was it not done?

2. Every motive of a temporal nature operated upon them to favor the Jews. Christ forewarned them to expect persecutions in his service. They were poor, destitute of human aid, and friendless; while against them was power, civil, military and ecclesiastical. And yet they adhered to their testimony, in opposition to priests, philosophers and rulers.

3. They attested their sincerity by enduring the greatest sufferings; "starving their gain, and martyrdom their price." Death, and worse than death. No perils could deter, no danger daunt them. The death and the Resurrection of Christ was their first and their last message in Jerusalem, in Antioch, in Philippi, in Corinth, in Athens and Rome.

They might often be on every side oppressed, but not distressed; perplexed, but not dispirited; persecuted, but not

deserted; prostrated, but not destroyed:* for when one was cut down, crucified, burnt at the stake, as in the gardens of Nero, or torn by wild beasts in the amphitheatre, others rose up to fill his place—and persecution proved like the sowing of dragon's teeth, where every one sprung up an armed man; so the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. The more effort was made against it, the more it progressed, till, from being a despised sect, it rose to occupy the seat of its former persecutors.

Now, men may suffer martyrdom in error, in defence of what they suppose true, when it is not; but they cannot do it, in the face of every human motive to the contrary, in defence of what they know to be a lie, a false statement of a fact. They gave the highest proof of their own faith in what they testified; and what would satisfy them, ought to create belief in all the world. They give us the evidence on which they believed, and we may go and do likewise. If all false, why not *one* even turn state's evidence?

4. But that is not all; they had the unequivocal testimony of Him that cannot lie, in their favor to confirm their words; just as much as if he had spoken, as in reference to Christ, by word of mouth from heaven.

Hence they were not to leave Jerusalem to begin their testimony till they were endued with power from on high.

"And then they went forth and preached everywhere, the *Lord working with them*, and *confirming* the word with signs following." "*Who gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.*"

A miracle then is an act of God, above the power of men, but by their hands, to confirm their words; and it is conclusive, for it is impossible to suppose that God would thus add his testimony to what is false, and to give credence to a message that he did not send. But he does become a voucher for the message which they delivered; they call for attestation from him, and he gives it.

5. We have a monument commemorating this great fact, and confirming the testimony of the witnesses, in the Holy Sabbath.

Immediately after the resurrection they set apart the first day of the week, and called it the Lord's Day, for this very reason, that on it he had risen—they made it their day of religious worship.

Ancient writers assert that this day was kept for that purpose. Barnabas says, that in his time "the eighth day was observed with gladness, being that on which Jesus rose from the dead." Many other ancient writers speak of the same thing. If the resurrection be denied, how can the fact of the observance of this day distinct from the Jewish Sabbath be accounted for?

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*[redacted]al rendering, and in the exact form of the original in 2 Cor. iv. 9.

"The first day of the week was everywhere celebrated for the Christian Sabbath, and which is not to be passed over without observing; as far as appears from Scripture, there is nowhere any dispute about the matter. There was controversy concerning circumcision, and other points of the Jewish religion, whether they were to be retained or not, but nowhere do we read concerning the change of the Sabbath. There were indeed some Jews converted to the Gospel, who as in some other things they retained a smack of their old Judaism, so they did in the observance of days (Rom. xiv. 5; Gal. iv. 10), but yet not rejecting or neglecting the Lord's day. They celebrated it and made no manner of scruple, it appears, concerning it; but they would have their old festival days too; and they disputed not at all, whether the Lord's day were to be celebrated, but whether the Jewish Sabbath ought not to be celebrated also."*

6. We have one argument more bearing on this point, and that is, The coming of Christ in power to destroy Jerusalem, and put an end both to the Church and State. His foretelling this is no ordinary prophecy; His fulfillment of it no ordinary miracle; when he took vengeance on them to the utmost for imbruing their hands in his blood; and then imprecating it upon themselves, and leaving it as a legacy to their children.

It was predicted under a variety of forms of expression: "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in *His Kingdom*;" "till they have *seen the Kingdom of God come* with power;" "till they *see the Kingdom of God*;" "when the Son of Man is revealed."

In the 24th chapter of Matthew, after giving a great variety of signs that are to precede, he says, "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven;" and soon after he says, "This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled."

The people then of that generation would have full proof that the Son of Man was the Divine Messiah, just as much as if he had appeared in person. And that his words were fulfilled to the very letter, in the terrible calamities that befell that unhappy nation, and that guilty city, we have the accounts of Josephus, a cotemporary and an eye-witness, and not a Christian: who seems to have been raised up and qualified by Providence, for this very purpose, to confirm the words of our Saviour unwittingly. Tacitus and Suetonius also relate many of the same facts; and they constitute part and parcel of Roman History.†

And there is no rebutting evidence. The story told by the soldiers that the disciples stole the body away while they slept, is incredible on the face of it; they did not believe it themselves. If true, it would involve them in ruin, for it was death to sleep

* Lightfoot's Works. 1670.

† Josephus' Jewish War, Book V. Sec. 8, &c. Tacitus' History, Book V. Sec. 13.

on guard. And how could they testify to what occurred while they were asleep? This story shows the inability of the Scribes and Pharisees to confute the testimony of the apostles. They have made no other denial of the facts.

When Peter, on the day of Pentecost, and in their most august council, charged home upon them the guilt of killing the Prince of Life, by wicked hands, whom God raised from the dead, and in whose name he and the other apostles wrought miracles, would they not have disproved his assertions, if in their power? But "They could say nothing against" what he had said and done. When they were cut to the heart, and took council to slay Peter, would they not have disproved his assertions if there had been any way to do it?

If they made any such attempt, why have not their writings come down to us—books written then and there on the spot? They could be as easily preserved as the writings of the Evangelists. They would not have as many enemies—not so much effort would be made to destroy them; and there have always been men ready to preserve and perpetuate them; but there is no evidence that any such book ever existed. While it can easily be shown that we have the record of the story told by the apostles; it has been quoted and copied so often; guarded by the providence of God from the malice of priests and kings; that it cannot be denied that we have essentially the words of the Holy Spirit, penned so long ago by holy men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

"Wrath and lightning" have guarded the sacred page, and if even every copy of the Bible were destroyed, it might all be collected again from the abundant quotations made from it in former times.

We remark, in closing, then—

1. It is vastly easier to believe in the resurrection of Christ than to disbelieve it. It is impossible not to receive the testimony we have, and account for the facts of the case in any other way.

It amounts, if not to a mathematical, yet, to a moral demonstration; unless we deny the possibility of proving such a fact, on any other, by human testimony, with the addition of Divine confirmation; and set aside all historical evidence.

2. We have here a most convincing proof of the Divinity of Christ. He has the keys of hell and of death. He laid down his life voluntarily, and took it up again. "He was declared to be the Son of God, with power according to the Spirit of holiness by *the resurrection from the dead.*" He claimed to be Divine: he was put to death on the charge of blasphemy, for falsely setting up such a claim; but he made it good by this act of raising himself from the dead. By the exertion of Divine Power, he proved that he was what he claimed to be, and God acknowledged

it. It was not possible that he should be holden by the cords of death, or the bars of the grave.

3. We see that he finished the work for which he came into the world, made an atonement for sin, introduced everlasting righteousness, and is every way qualified to be the Saviour of the world, for he ever liveth to make intercession.

God has accepted his work; and now on the ground of it, invites all to come and seek the pardon of their sins.

He proclaims to all that feel their wants, to come, and they shall be supplied out of a full treasury in the hands of Christ, who hath done all things well, and is sealed by the Father and by authority offered to the world. All the prophecies, types, and shadows of the Old Testament met in Him.

4. We have in the resurrection of Christ a pledge of the resurrection of his people. "Because I live, ye shall live also." "He that believeth in me shall never die." "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen." "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." He is the first fruits, they are the full harvest. He is the point of union and the principle of life. He was made a life-giving spirit. He has only to order, as in the case of Lazarus, and all the realms of the dead will become instinct with life.

5. But, finally, though it is true that if Christ be *not* risen, you may be still in your sins; yet it does not follow of course when it is proved that he has risen, that you are not in your sins.

Without personal application to him, and faith in him as your Saviour, you cannot be saved. He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification; but we are justified by faith in his name, and faith is an operative assent to his word.

His precious blood must be sprinkled upon our consciences to purge them from dead works to serve the living God. We may have all remedies for disease at hand, but if not employed and applied, they will do no good. So with the provisions of the Gospel: they do not operate in a magical way, and at a distance; Christ must be brought nigh to us, and we to him. He must be formed in us the hope of glory.

THE ELEVENTH HOUR WORKER.

Two great facts at once meet us in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. One is, that so far as making God's glory the grand *end* of our being, we are all by nature standing idle. The other is, that God, whose favor we have all forfeited by our sins, is pleased to call and receive the willing and obedient into his vineyard at all hours of the day of life. Wonderful as it is, that he should call us at all, the wonder of wonders is, that at life's

latest evening hour, he should bid us enter his vineyard. But this arrangement is to the praise of the glory of his grace.

God is pleased to call aged sinners into his kingdom, to show the sovereignty of his grace. As every man, young or old, has forfeited his favor, God would teach us that he is under obligation to none, and therefore has mercy on whom he will. So that while it is true that all who seek him early shall find him, it is not true that none who seek him late shall find him. We know that the young, with hearts tender and impressible, are the most hopeful subjects of renewing grace; that in old age the moral sensibilities become more indurated, evil habits more confirmed, and the chains of sin more strongly riveted upon us. But yet God is pleased to interpose by his all-conquering grace, and bring even aged sinners into his kingdom. Nicodemus, though old, could be born again. That so many of the aged do not come to Christ is owing to the fact—not that they are not called—but that they do not hear the voice of God. It is the merciful province of the Spirit to unstop their deaf ears, and so incline them to hear, that their souls shall live.

Again God calls aged sinners into his kingdom to teach us that none should despair of mercy. All who penitently and believingly beg for mercy shall find mercy. If we may not pray and hope because we are great sinners, then the mouths of all, young and old, must be stopped. Many of the young, so rapidly downward is their course, are more bold and hardened in sin, than some on whom rests the weight of three score years and ten. Let the aged then remember that God, who is rich in mercy to all that call upon him, delights in showing mercy to the "poor in spirit" in all periods and conditions of life; that one day is with him as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day; that he looks not to the number of years at all, or to the number of sins, but to this man will he look "that is poor and of a contrite heart and that trembleth at his word."

> "And while the lamp holds out to burn,
> The vilest sinner may return."

Though they may have stood idle so far as seeking their salvation and God's glory is concerned till the Eleventh hour, yet the voice of the Master is: "Why stand ye all the day idle? Go ye also into my vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive." Life's one hour remains, and that is one of mercy and hope. Luke Short hears the Saviour's voice after an hundred years spent in sin. And if the aged may come, let none despair.

Again God may call aged sinners into his kingdom, that by the great good done by them the little remaining time, they may rebuke the inefficiency of those who have been many years in the Church. What multitudes go limping and halting through long *years in* the church, as with the unequal legs of the lame man!

Oh, how often do young professors, and those of longer standing in the church, need a fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost to arouse them from spiritual slumber, that they may gird on anew their armor, and go forth with fresh zeal to the great battle of the Lord.

But whether or not these may be among the reasons why God calls aged sinners into his kingdom, the glorious fact is, that he does call us, poor sinners, by his word, providence and Spirit, at all periods of our mortal life, from early dawn till its last evening hour.

To the young of the third hour of life's day, the voice of the Master is: "Go ye into the vineyard now, lest life's sun, rising so brightly, go down ere noon in darkness forever."

To the middle aged of the sixth hour he calls: "Go ye into the vineyard. You are now in the meridian. Cast your eye back to the morning horizon whence you set out. See with what rapid flight the wheels of time have borne you on. From this high stand-point look down to the evening horizon where sets life's sun, and consider how speedily will that sun hasten to its going down."

To the aged of the ninth and eleventh hour of life's little day, a voice from above is still calling, "Go ye also into the vineyard. The sun still shines, but with a softened, mellowed light. Behold how low life's sun has descended. See the high mountains casting their lengthening shadows far across the valleys. Soon will night spread her dark pall over you. Haste ye to Christ ere the shadows of death enfold you. Go work while it is day. The night is near when no man can work. Believe and love, and work and pray, and great shall be your reward."—*Puritan Rec.*

DESIRE OF PRE-EMINENCE.

There can surely be no doubt as to the duty of every man to strive after high excellence—at whatever is intellectually and spiritually ennobling. Such excellence is not only worthy the earnest pursuit of all, but its possession comes of aspiring and of labor. But there is quite a difference between aiming at eminence and vaunting of it. The fact that any individual has occasion to flaunt the claim, begets suspicion as to the validity of all such assumption. Certainly this is no part of the religion of Him who taught his followers that they should obey a different law from "the lords of the Gentiles,"—a law that respected the least as the greatest, which counted the servant as ruler; and whose word, following in the same vein, teaches His disciples while being "kindly affectioned" in honor to prefer one another. Modern tendencies are quite as strong as

when such injunctions were given, to fan, among disciples of a common faith, the desire of pre-eminence. The Saviour enjoined on those bearing His name and wearing His likeness, that they refuse to be called RABBI. This lesson they seem to have faithfully kept. Peter and John and James, and others, are brethren having naught to distinguish them but a common ardor in one great service. Paul and Barnabas are laborers in common. The former, though counselling his loved sons in the Gospel, Timothy, Titus and Onesimus, does not arrogate for himself any superiority over them. Never does he forget, in his salutations, his most unknown or unhonored fellow-workers, not omitting the caution "Help those women who labored with me in the Gospel with Clement also," &c., repeating carefully his remembrance to the cherished household of Onesiphorous which had remembered him in his bonds. Peter knows him, learned as he was, and intellectually "the very chief of the apostles," while counting himself "nothing," as "our beloved brother, Paul."

We will not affirm that the primitive spirit which thus knit in a common "brotherhood" those holding to "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," has died out of modern Christianity. It still lives. But is it not beset with sore temptations? Does the disciple of Christ now, as much as when under the eye of that Divine Teacher, shrink from the awards and appellations which in name, at least, place him above his fellows? Is the rivalry for excellence—for holiness—the distinguishing rivalry of Christians, of ministers, of those invited to trusts of responsibility? Are churches, societies, Sabbath schools, conference circles, choirs, each and all, animated only to be like Christ—do the work of Christ and receive the reward which he bestows? The beloved John, who desired most of all to see his children "walking in the truth," and "fellow-helpers to the truth," was confronted by one of whom he says: "I wrote to the church; but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not." This love made him a man of "malicious words," and a disturber of the peace of Zion. Of him we have no other—no better record. His love of "pre-eminence" ruled him to the hurt of himself and of others.

This same spirit still lives clothed in new forms—nursed by new agencies, to oppose which is sometimes to set one's self against the very current itself. The feeling yet clamors for the ascendant that asks not, "How can I bring most honor to my Lord?" but "How can I be most honored of men?" Parity is disliked,—"pre-eminence" sought. Does not the state of our Zion too much declare it?—*Watchman and Reflector.*

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SERMON DCXCIII.

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LYDIA'S CONVERSION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

"And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made, and we sat down and spake to the women that resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there. And she constrained us."—Acts xvi. 13, 15.

May it not be that many fail to be converted by reason of incorrect notions of what conversion is? May they not be unaware of the fact, that ignorance of the truth on this subject will be just as fatal to the soul as poison, taken by mistake, will be to the body? Is there not a sense of security here that ought to be alarmed? There are many that hear the Gospel, to whom as yet it is far enough from being a savor of life unto life. May not one reason be, that they do not rightly apprehend it? They have indeed certain ideas about conversion—but whether right or not, how few of them take the trouble to inquire! My impression is, that many from this cause live and die unconverted—their dim and cloudy views filling up the avenue through which truth, with its stirring realities, enters the soul.

It is, then, with unfeigned pleasure that I am able to give you an instance of real conversion, together with the circumstances

and feelings which accompanied and followed it, and all endorsed by the spirit of truth; so that every one may see what it is; what is essential to it—what its effects are, and what he himself must be and do in order to be saved.

This instance is that of Lydia; and without adverting to all its instructive points, these, which will be illustrated in their order, will be sufficient for my purpose: THE IMPEDIMENT *in the way of her conversion;* THE AGENT *by whom it was removed;* THE CIRCUMSTANCES *attending its removal,* AND THE CONSEQUENCES *which followed it.*

I. What the impediment in the way of her conversion was, is seen in the statement, "Whose heart the Lord *opened.*" Till then it was *shut*—it did not admit the truth, which pressed from without. There was self-satisfaction. Her heart had guests which suited its taste; and fearful of reprisals—apprehensive that thoughts might come in to disturb what was going on, it had shut and barred the door to keep them out. This was the impediment. There are many things which contribute to shut the heart against the Gospel, and to keep it closed: such as deeply rooted prejudices—erroneous views of the truth, and especially habits of vice and licentiousness; but then these things would not very seriously endanger one's salvation if they did not close up his heart to the impressions of guilt and the powers of the world to come. If Belshazzar, and Haman, and Judas, and Simon Magus, had suffered the sober voice of reason and conscience to enter their hearts in the hour of temptation that ruined them, would they not have been saved from the terrible shipwreck of character and hope which they experienced? You have seen men who seemed to have but little sensibility in view of our suffering humanity, and less disposition to go out of their way to relieve it. That which operates like a charm on certain minds—the work, for instance, of aiding the fugitive from oppression, or that of giving light to the dark places of earth, is all a blank to them. The manifest reason is, that they have shut their hearts to every impression that calls for self-denial and self-sacrifice. It seems to us, also, that men engaged in the liquor traffic, do not give a fair equivalent for what they receive—for bread they give a stone; for a fish a serpent; for the money received, they give poverty and a ruined character, and broken hopes, and wretched families, and premature deaths. We think that even they must see that such are the regular fruits of their business. Why are they so blind? The answer is, their hearts have they *closed* to the truth.

You have all seen the stubborn child, pouting his lips, and darting fire from his eyes, simply because his parents bade him do a very reasonable thing, but a thing that he disliked to do. Have you a doubt what made him look so ugly—what made him mutter such bitter words? Why no; his heart was in fault—it was *shut.*

This, then, is the grand impediment which hinders the conversion of sinners. And hence they are described in the Bible as "having eyes, but seeing not; as having ears, but hearing not; as having hearts, but understanding not." And then the reason given is all the more impressive because it is so obviously true: "*their eyes have they closed*," and let their hearts wax gross, lest they should see with" their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and be converted." Yes, here is the impediment, and what is worse, it is placed by sinners themselves across the path to life, and obstinately kept there. They are helped, however, in this suicidal policy by an agency which ought to startle, as if a serpent stung them. Listen—for I quote from the word of Him who cannot lie—"For if our Gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, *lest* the light of the glorious Gospel of the Son of God should shine into them." To keep out this light they shut up their hearts. Hence Christ is said to stand at the door of the heart and to knock, while but few, very few, open the door, and thus let salvation in. This was Lydia's difficulty, till she went to the prayer meeting by the river's side. She went there, as many now go to the house of God, with a heart closed to the truth, as it is in Jesus; but *there*, unexpectedly to herself, it was opened, and emotions of new and unutterable interest filled her soul, and immediately she passed from death unto life.

II. And here we naturally ask, *By whom was this impediment removed?*

"Whose heart the LORD opened." It was not effected by any charm in that prayer meeting—nor by the power of human persuasion, nor by the unusual thoughtfulness and effort of Lydia herself. It was the work of God. Not that means are useless, nor that Lydia had no control over her own heart—but simply that as she had shut it against the claims of God, and would never of her own accord remove the barricade, so the opening depended on the mercy of God. And what was true in her case is a truth so universal, that the Bible casts us all on the same resource for help against the ruin which our own obstinacy will otherwise bring upon us, declaring, that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy—that neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase."

And here, if we bear in mind what is meant by opening the heart, and why it must be opened, if opened at all, by God himself, we shall feel none of the difficulties which will otherwise perplex the subject. You never suppose that because a child shuts his heart against cheerfully doing the reasonable things required by his parents, that therefore he cannot do them, but only that he is self-willed and obstinate, and *will* not, nor that the father is

to be blamed for undertaking in any proper way to open the heart of his child to just impressions of his duty. But this is just the case of all the stout-hearted towards God. It is not inability, but willfulness—it is not ignorance, but selfishness, that leads them to shut their hearts against the voice of God. Let this be remembered, and who will think hard of any one but themselves, if

> "The transformation of apostate man
> From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,
> Is work for Him that made him."

III. But another important fact appears in this history of Lydia's conversion, relating TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES in which this opening of closed hearts is effected.

When this is declared to be the work of God, it is regarded by some as justifying the inference that human effort in the case is useless; and that the opening, as it depends on God, can be made in one place as well as another. But this is the language of a thoughtless, if not a bitter caviller. So the truly thoughtful never reason. It is forbidden by the clear light shed over the whole subject from the circumstances attending Lydia's conversion. WHERE *was it that her heart was opened?*—and, *by what* MEANS? It *was at a* PRAYER MEETING, and by MEANS *of the truth that Paul preached there.* In all this can you discover any violation of the laws of free agency, or any thing justifying the inference in regard to the uselessness of means?

Let us recur to our former illustration—the case of a *froward* child. Why is he so disobedient? It is because he loves his own selfish pleasure more than the duty he owes to his parents. This is precisely the state of feeling which every sinner cherishes towards God. He loves the gratifications of self-indulgence, and intensely dislikes the healthy self-denials of Christian duty. He is unwilling, therefore, to conform his will to the infinitely better will of God. Now in the case of the child, it is obvious to all that if the father undertakes to open his heart and subdue his stubbornness, he must do it by the use of *appropriate means;* and yet, that whatever the means, whether the application of the rod, or the voice of persuasion, or the cutting language of reproof, the child was active and voluntary through the whole process, though the father opened his heart. In the day of the father's power, if I may so use the language of Scripture, the child was made willing to do his duty. Now it is precisely thus that God deals with the rebellious and froward in opening their hearts—by the judgments of his rod, or by the melting voice that comes from Calvary. And all the while they bear about the consciousness that they can open or shut their hearts to truthful impressions, *just as they please;* that they can read the Bible—go to the place of prayer and be thoughtful, or they put the

Bible aside, and go to places of mirth, and be thoughtless, *just as they please.* And when, go where they will, they do not succeed in drowning the still small voice, and hushing the terrible voice of guilt; and when this pressure on the conscience becomes at length so great as to bring them openly to ask, What shall we do? there is still the clear consciousness of acting freely. And when they bow to the supremacy of God, and their hearts are opened to receive the pardon and justification of free grace, they never complain of any forceful influence, nor do they say, Our own arm hath gotten the victory—but, "Not unto us—not unto us, but to thy name give glory for thy mercy and thy truth's sake." Thus all along was there an awakened, active mind, conscious freedom, while the Spirit of God begat them unto a lively hope *with the word of truth.*

Still God is not confined to one method of operation. In Lydia's case, the means seemed like the gentle rain—in Paul's, there was the sterner voice of the storm; in the Jailor's at Philippi, the earthquake that shook the prison, combined its voice with the truth that shook his soul. In every conversion recorded in the Bible, *there was an apprehension of danger—great seriousness, and earnest inquiry after the way to be saved,* while the caviller as such, and the disputer of this world, and the thoughtless infidel continued as before dead in trespasses and sins, thus proving that though God begets us of *his own will,* it is always *with the word of truth;* and that, too, in such a way as to demand the active co-operation of those who do not receive the grace of God in vain.

It was thus with Lydia. She went to the prayer meeting and heard Paul preach; and there the Lord opened her heart with the truth which had been commended to her judgment and conscience. Oh, if she had been a trifler there; or if she had been engrossed with a fascinating novel, or if she had stayed away, do you not fully believe that her history would have been as dark with selfishness as now it is radiant with the light of truth and love?

IV. And now we come to the CONSEQUENCES of this opening of her heart.

The first noticeable effect was, *an earnest attention* to the word.

"Whose heart the Lord opened, that she *attended* to the things that were spoken of Paul." If listless before, she was attentive now. She heard as for her life. The word met a felt want of her soul. The same effect is seen wherever divine influence is felt. The Gospel all at once is heard, as it was never heard before. It is heard as a message of life or death to the soul. It is impossible to be indifferent when the hope of heaven first dawns on the soul. When the Lord opens the heart, evil passions are driven out, and a satisfying good enters. A new world opens—

new thoughts are awakened—new joys speak. No wonder the eye is *attentive* to the publisher of such good tidings; no wonder the ear is greedy of the ravishing sound of praise and salvation.

This breathless attention to the word we have all witnessed; and it was marvellous in our eyes. O come the Sabbath day, and the solemn assembly, where the like attentiveness shall attest the presence and power of the Holy Spirit!

The next effect of Lydia's conversion was her public profession of religion, and the baptism of herself and her household.

She entered in due timeinto covenant with God and his people, and had the seal of the covenant applied to her children.

Such an effect should follow in every case of conversion. The heart, which the Lord has opened, will pine if kept too long away from the ordinances of his house. It will begin to close, and continue to close its door to the truth, if there be a thoughtless refusal to appoint a suitable day for the public espousals to Christ. The sacramental bread and wine are needed for its nourishment in the divine life. "My flesh," said Christ, "is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." Yes, every converted soul needs to take into his own hands the memorials of that broken body and shed blood—needs the restraints as well as the stirring influence of a public profession of religion! Else, being disobedient, the light of hope will soon become dim—the prospect will be cloudy, and lacking the usual enjoyment—the soul will begin to backslide—the cravings of a still very imperfectly sanctified heart after worldly good will again be felt, and thus years of decline and comparative uselessness will come and go, and perhaps death ensue, and there be no illumination of hope around the death shade. How much better for every convert to do as Lydia did, and join the church of Christ, resolved henceforth to be a shining light!

And may I not appeal to some of my readers who have for years indulged the hope of pardon without confessing Christ before men, for proof that you are losers by it on the score of growth and activity in the divine life? Do you not find the light for which you were waiting, moving farther off, and the evidence of your piety becoming more indistinct, and the joys of your first love seeming like a dream, and temptations to go astray multiplying and gaining strength? Indeed, how can it be otherwise? Not to do the things that Christ commands is to play into the hands of the evil one—it is to fill the mind with doubt and the heart with unbelief, and to paralyze the energies of the soul in the way of well doing. Does not all this prove that the Lord has a controversy with you? O think of it, lest a deeper darkness gather around you, and the sorrows of a hopeless death-bed be yours. Think of Lydia, and imitate her promptness in obeying the calls of duty.

And here let us thank God that the children of believers are

not forgotten in the provisions of his mercy, and that they are permitted to be associated with their parents in the privileges of the everlasting covenant first made with the father of the faithful. Believers in Christ are described as the children of Abraham, and of course have an interest in the covenant which spread the wing of its grace over his household. This privilege Lydia and those who acted with her seemed to appreciate. Not a word is said about her children's conversion; and yet no sooner was she converted and baptized, than her household were baptized also. It seemed to be regarded as a matter of course—an effect sure to follow the cause supposed. And indeed who would wish to have it otherwise, and thus to divide households and separate parents and children—an idea abhorrent to the Jewish mind, and, as it seems to us, to the mind of God. Is this promise nothing—"I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee?" So Lydia did not feel; and so may we never feel.

Another consequence of the opening of Lydia's heart to Christianity, *was the manifestation of a benevolent, self-sacrificing spirit.*

"If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord," she said to Paul and his associate, "come into my house and abide there." And the historian adds, "She constrained us." Yes, faithfulness to the Lord always brings with it largeness of heart. She so prized the gospel as the regeneration of society, as well as of individual hearts, that she cheerfully gave bed and board to its preachers at Philippi. She would not be denied the privilege—"She *constrained* us." The religion that does not make men benevolent and self-sacrificing for the general good, is not the religion of Lydia—it is not the religion of Christ. It is only profession without principle—it is a name—not a power. And herein is a test, by which we may know whether we are in the faith.

And here I should close, were it not that two inferences are presented so clear, and at the same time so important that I cannot forbear the statement and a brief illustration of them.

1. The one is, *that God moves first in regeneration.*

Nothing is said as to the nature and source of the impulse that led Lydia to that prayer meeting by the river's side; it may have been the force of early education—it may have been mere curiosity—and it may have been the persuasive, though unconscious influence of the Holy Spirit. But when there, she made no advance in a Christian education till the *Lord* opened her heart. He moved first in the change, which ever afterwards was her chief joy, and is now the crown of her rejoicing in heaven.

So now God moves first in the regenerating process. No heart is of its own accord opened to Christ, though he stands at the door and knocks till his hair is wet with the dews of night. And it was not till after a thorough and conclusive trial had been

made that he publicly declared the fact, and the reason. "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." And then he endorses the truth which came out so clearly in Lydia's conversion—that God moves first—by the words, "No man can come unto me except the Father which sent me draw him."

Let any impartial man who doubts this try his own heart, and see if it will yield to the strongest religious motives that he can bring to bear upon it. Let him say to his soul, in view of the judgment and its final issues, "Yield now to the just supremacy of thy Maker, and to the grace that is in Christ Jesus, forsaking every sin. Thy race will shortly be run, and every hour thou art in danger till thy peace is made with God." Now what is the effect of an appeal so truthful, so impressive as this? Does his heart cheerfully yield the throne to God, and crucify its lusts? O no. It still lies heavy there, just like a rock of ice—its idols are all retained, even while it quakes with its fearful looking-for of judgment and the fiery indignation which is to follow. No. He will not come unto Christ that he might have life.

So the Bible exhibits the fact in the parable of the Supper, from which the invited guests all with one consent begged to be excused, and that, too, for reasons the most frivolous, though the real reason was not given—that *they did not wish to come.*

Hence it is evident that God, and not man, moves first in the work of regeneration, and the *necessity* for it is the sinner's own fault, since it is only his own stubbornness and intense aversion to truth and purity that makes the help of the Holy Spirit so indispensable.

2. The other inference to which I alluded, as clearly springing from the history of Lydia, is, *that it is not a matter of indifference*, as is sometimes alleged, *whether we attend religious meetings or not.*

What if Lydia, on the morning of that day in which the Lord opened her heart to the impressions of the Gospel, had reasoned, as many since have falsely reasoned, on this wise—"If I am elected to be saved, the event is certain, do what I will; if not, I shall be lost, do what I can to prevent, and therefore I will not attend the prayer meeting this morning by the river side. I will rather seek for gratification in such scenes of amusement as this city affords;" is it not morally certain that the effect would have been widely different from what it was? Bearing in mind this general principle laid down by James, "Of his own will begat he us *with the word of truth*," we cannot but think that her conversion turned on her hearing the Gospel; and hence that it was not a matter of indifference whether she attended religious meetings or not, or whether she trifled or not while there. To shun *the* place of prayer—to avoid that hearing of Christianity, by

which the apostle says, "faith cometh;" to keep the mind filled and occupied with worldly cares and pleasures; to form the habit of cavilling on the subject of religious doctrines and duties; to let the imagination revel in scenes of impurity, seems to us by every deduction of sober reason, and by the uniform testimony of the Bible, to be a policy whose only tendency is to ruin the soul. The education thus obtained will certainly unfit us for the employments of heaven.

True, many attend church and hear the voice of prayer and the offers of Christianity, whose hearts the Lord does not open—whose minds fail to receive the impress of the Gospel. But is there not a cause—a cause, too, in themselves? May it not be, because they permit the god of this world to blind their minds, so that the light of the Gospel is hid? Yet it is also true that only those are converted who are led in some way to know themselves—their guilt and self-ruin—and the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The Spirit of God goes with his word. To put asunder what He has joined together is the mark of desperate depravity. He has joined his Spirit in the work of regeneration to one whose outward ear is open to the truth. In his purpose he joins the means and the end—the cause and the effect. He decreed that Hezekiah's life should be prolonged fifteen years; but if Hezekiah had trusted merely to the decree, and refused to take any food, it is certain that he would not have lived a month; nor would the divine purpose have been frustrated, for that embraced the *means* as well as the *end*.

So any one of you, my hearers, can join yourselves *to*, or separate yourselves *from* the word of God. You can, if you choose, be thoughtful—you can incline your ear to the Gospel. You can compare yourselves with the divine law—you can let your thoughts run in this direction till your heart shall be greatly disquieted on its bed of self-indulgence, and till you shall cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner." This is the course of sober common sense. It is the course which God prescribes. But there is another and a widely different course which you can take, and be equally voluntary. You can be thoughtless. You can drown the voice of conscience—you can avoid the place of prayer. You can fill your mind with the slang of scepticism; you can refuse to read the Bible and to pray. You can be the companion of fools. You can quench the Spirit—you can put asunder what God has joined together. Then, as surely as Hezekiah would have died if he had taken no food, so surely will you perish utterly in your corruptions.

I, therefore, call heaven and earth to record, that I have this day set before you life and death; a blessing and a curse—a blessing that your soul pines to enjoy, a curse that never causeless comes!

SERMON DCXCIV.

BY REV. THOMAS L. SHIPMAN,

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NO COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE DEAD TO THE LIVING.

"It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth); such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth); how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."—2 Cor. xii. 1–4.

I have not read this paragraph of Scripture for the purpose of descanting upon the remarkable scene which it presents before us. We may not pry, with a vain curiosity, into things which the apostle declares it was not lawful for him to utter. But why it was unlawful for him to communicate his "visions and revelations," may be both a proper and a profitable inquiry. We may find in the sequel, that much practical truth stands connected with the solution of the inquiry.

We have an account of others, besides Paul, returning from the world of spirits. Lazarus was recalled from the dead. Many bodies of the saints which slept, arose and came out of their graves, after the resurrection of Christ, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Dorcas was restored from the eternal world to earth. But there is no intimation that any of them made the slightest communication of what they had seen or heard in the world of spirits. Why this common and unbroken silence? Men are, if possible, more eager to tell than to hear some new thing. The saints who arose after the resurrection of Christ had doubtless been deceased for some time, though probably not long, as they seem to have been recognized by those to whom they appeared. They had opportunity to communicate intelligence; for they appeared unto many. Why did they not avail themselves of it? Some have supposed that Lazarus and Dorcas, particularly, had nothing to communicate—that their spirits were not, during their brief separation from the body, in a sentient state, or, at least, that there is no reason to think that they had visions and revelations of heaven. This supposition is perfectly gratuitous, and in the case of the saints who arose after the resurrection of Christ, seems very improbable; for they must have been deceased for a considerable time, and it comports with all our ideas of a future state, that the believer, "absent from the

body, is present with the Lord." "*To-day*," said Christ to the penitent thief, "shalt thou be with me in paradise." Others have suggested, that whatever knowledge they obtained of the eternal world, vanished from recollection upon return to the body. This supposition is not less gratuitous than the former.

But, admitting that all these persons told nothing because they had nothing to tell, the inquiry comes back, why Paul, whose spirit was in a sentient state, and who might have communicated "visions and revelations of the Lord," if it had been lawful, was not permitted to utter any thing which he saw and heard in paradise. The same reasons which made it unlawful for Paul to reveal what he had learned of the eternal world, will explain the silence of the others to whom allusion has been made. Why, then, was it not lawful for Paul to utter the things which he saw and heard in paradise? I propose to state several probable reasons.

I. *It is the express will of God, that we should derive our knowledge of the eternal world from the Bible.*

He has given us His word to be our guide to eternal life. It is a safe guide. It is a sufficient guide. All that we need to know—all it seems best to our Heavenly Father that we should at present know of a future state—is here revealed. More we might not be able to bear. More might gratify an idle curiosity at the expense of turning our minds away from those practical truths in which we have so deep a present personal interest. We may press a thousand queries.

It may seem desirable to have information upon many subjects on which the Bible maintains a profound silence. We would know where heaven is—the number of its inhabitants—the nature of their employments and the mode of their intercourse, far more definitely than we at present do; by what means the soul, when it leaves the body, will reach the place of its abode; whether heaven will at once burst upon the departing saint—whether he will recognize those whom he has known on earth—whether those who have been mutually dear on earth will rejoice in each other as such in heaven. We would know why sin entered the world, and what is to be the extent of its dark domain. We would know the nature of Christ's glorified body, and thus with what body His followers shall rise. These and many like questions curiosity puts and puts in vain.

How far Paul was qualified by his visions and revelations to answer them, we know not; but, doubtless, many things of a deeply interesting nature he might, if it had been lawful, have communicated. That he and others have not been permitted to bring information from the world of spirits, is proof that the Bible reveals all pertaining to that world which it is best for us at present to know.

Our Saviour, in his reply to the question, "Are there few that be saved?" intimates that all questions of mere curiosity respecting a future state—turning away our thoughts from our own present duties, on which our own future and eternal well-being depends, are impertinent. While the written revelation was yet imperfect, God communicated his will through visions and revelations. Thus he communicated with the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with Samuel and the prophets, and with the apostles, and other early Christians; but since the canon has been closed with the seer of the visions of Patmos, and guarded against the least alteration by a woe upon him who should add to or take from its contents, all *such* communications from heaven have ceased. I say *such* communications. We may have intercourse with heaven when we will. "Truly our fellowship is, *is*, not shall be, with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." Aid to understand the present revelation, we may expect, but new revelations we are not to expect. Even the Holy Spirit, whose office is to communicate truth, is restricted to taking of the things of Christ. "He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." There is a lesson in the silence which has reigned for more than eighteen hundred years. Its testimony is, that the Bible reveals all that we need to know—all that it is best we should at present know, pertaining to the spiritual world.

II. *Were such communications to be made, they would divert our minds from the Bible, our guide to eternal life.*

Had Paul been permitted to utter his visions and revelations, the men of his time would have been looking for other similar communications, and their attention have been turned quite away from that counsel of Christ—"Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and *they are they which testify of me.*" Men are ever prone to look for other opportunities, and other means of religious impression, than those which they at present enjoy. It was so in Christ's day. The Jews were constantly seeking "a sign from heaven." "Except ye see signs and wonders," said Christ, "ye will not believe." He was working before them the works of God,—by his word making the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, and even the dead to live; and yet, they were clamoring for a sign from heaven, some miraculous appearance in the air, more startling than any thing which was transpiring on the earth. But this desire he would not gratify. "An evil and adulterous generation," says he, "seeketh after a sign and there shall no sign be given it but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

He here directs them to his Resurrection as the miracle, which, above every other, should prove his divine legation.

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus he recognizes, and by the mouth of his servant Abraham, rebukes this infidel spirit. "I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them; lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, they have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. And he said unto him, Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead they will repent; and he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Men, at this day, are prone to quiet themselves in their present unbelief by the fancy that some sudden startling influence will hereafter rouse their sensibilities, and sway their conduct; and, it is noticeable, how God in his providence disappoints the expectation. Never were there fewer conversions to Christ than during the progress of the Asiatic cholera in its first circuit of death. At no period of life does repentence, so far as we can judge, so unfrequently occur, as in the awful hour of death. It is often an hour of the wildest delirium; more often a season of profound lethargy, so deep as to be scarcely distinguished from the "sleep that hath no waking." God so orders things in his providence as to disappoint expectation from future opportunities, and future means of religious impression, as if on purpose to throw us back upon the Bible, and upon the improvement of this His chosen means of salvation.

III. Had Paul been permitted to utter his visions and revelations, *it might have encouraged others to expect such communications, and dreams and phantasms of the imagination been taken for heavenly visions.*.

We know what power the imagination has—what reality it gives to things unreal—to "airy nothings." And sad would it be, if by any means we should be suffered to take its hallucinations for "visions and revelations of the Lord." Numerous facts might be stated to show the power of an excited imagination to fill the mind with strange, and apparently supernatural visions. Most of the facts, however, are too wild and ludicrous in their incoherence to be with propriety introduced in this place; many occurring in the times upon which we have fallen are too *silly* to be entertained in any place.

Survivors often think that they hear music in the air just after the death of their friends, particularly those who in their lifetime were eminently holy. Now this may be easily explained from the power of imagination. There is usually much singing by the bed-side of dying christians. The mind retains a very vivid conception of the music, and easily mistakes the vivid con-

ception of music for music actually filling the air. A person expecting to be called at a particular moment, for example, to take his place by the couch of a sick friend, will hear his own name with the most perfect distinctness. He mistakes the vivid conception of the sound for the sound itself. So one standing on the shore, anxiously looking for the arrival of his vessel, will be confident that he sees the vessel. He sees it with his "mind's eye." We may at once account for those sights and sounds which persons just translated from the darkness of nature into the marvellous light of the Gospel, are wont to see and hear. The imagination is intensely excited, the mind is filled with images of heavenly things, and these vivid images are mistaken for actual perceptions.

> "We listen to our fond hopes
> Even till they seem no more our fancy's children;
> We put on them a prophet's robe, endow them
> With prophets' voices, and then Heaven speaks in them,
> And that which we would have be, surely shall be."

I am the more confirmed in the truth of this explanation, in view of the fact that these sights and sounds are perceived only when the imagination is greatly excited. If they are real, it is difficult to see why they should not be repeated when the mind is in a calm, unruffled state—the state most favorable for enjoying communion with Heaven. But I apprehend it will be found upon careful inquiry, that these preternatural sights and sounds are perceived only when the nervous system is deranged, or the mind is in a highly excited state.

It will perhaps be suggested, that the visions of the imagination, wanting the authority of miraculous attestation, might be perfectly harmless, for unauthenticated by miracles they can never obtain credence, much less such credence as to supplant the "faithful word." Such a suggestion, were it to be made, would betray much ignorance of facts. Mankind have, from the beginning, been ready to believe anything and everything, rather than inspired, miraculously authenticated truth. How often did God rebuke his chosen people for turning away from his servants to listen to false prophets, who "spake a vision of their own hearts, and not from the mouth of the Lord." Said Christ to the Jews, "I am come in my Father's name and ye receive me not, if another shall come in his own name him ye will receive." How many remain in willing ignorance of God's blessed word, whilst they repose a single-hearted faith in all the legends and mummeries of Popery.

What multitudes have turned away from the simple but sublime descriptions of heaven by the Apostle John, to believe the inflated and foolish revelations of the Koran. Among its fooleries let me just notice Mahomet's account of his journey to heaven. He solemnly affirmed that "he had been to the heaven *of heavens*—had successively ascended to seven heavens, with

his companion Gabriel, receiving and returning the salutations of its blessed inhabitants—had then proceeded alone within two bow-shots of the throne of the Almighty, when he felt the cold which pierced him to the heart, and was touched on the shoulder by the hand of God, who commanded him to pray fifty times a day, but with the advice of Moses he was prevailed on to have the number reduced to five, and that he then returned to Jerusalem and to Mecca, having performed the journey of thousands of years in the tenth part of a night." Puerile as all this is, I question whether it is a whit more so than the visions of Emanuel Swedenborg, that prince of dreamers; or the revelations of Smith, the prophet of Mormonism; or last, not least, the responses of spiritual rappings. And yet, Swedenborgians, and Mormons, and Spiritualists are to be found among the sons of New England, distinguished above every other people for coolness of judgment and caution against every species of imposition; so credulous is the human mind in its best estate of error, so averse to truth, even "the truth as it is in Jesus."

The silence which broods over the grave, is a mute, indeed, but stern rebuke of all pretences to correspondence with departed spirits. Of the myriads who have passed through the veil into eternity, not one has been permitted to return a word of information. A few have come back to earth, and mingled awhile in its every day scenes; but in respect to the things which they saw in the world of spirits, their lips have been closed in speechless silence. "Death, the mysterious passage to the spirit land, is as new and untried as when Abel first explored the fearful labyrinth." We think of our departed friends till our hearts are ready to burst. How it would relieve the agony of separation, if they could once more break the silence of death! Why are they not permitted to tell us at least that they are now happy in the presence of that Saviour whose name they here bore, and in whose grace they trusted through the days of earth's pilgrimage? Perhaps for the same reason that made it unlawful for Paul to utter the things which he saw and heard in paradise. Were they suffered to revisit us, though unseen, and to make their presence manifest by the whispers of love, we might expect the recurrence of such scenes, and the visions of an excited imagination to be mistaken for the visits of departed spirits, and the wildest phantasms of our own minds to be taken for revelations from the unseen world. We shall go to them, but they shall not return to us.

IV. *We have no reason to believe, that messengers from the dead could give testimony more impressive than that we now have.*

Without miracles, they could give no testimony on which any reliance could be placed. Suppose Paul had communicated the things which he saw and heard in paradise, unaccompanied by

miracles, the narrative would have been entitled to no credence. The things which he took for heavenly visions might have been visions of his own imagination, and on no account, whatever, to be received as revelations from heaven, no more than the trance of Tennent, or the wonderful dream of Doddridge. Tennent and Doddridge, and others, may, for aught we can say, have had communications made to them from heaven. Tennent went to the grave under the solemn impression, that while he lay in this trance, he saw things unseen by mortal eyes; but the only way in which the fact can be established to the satisfaction of others, is by the power of miracles. But with miracles, we have no reason to believe that messengers from the dead could give more impressive testimony than we now have. The reply of Abraham to the rich man, by fair implication, teaches this. "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto them, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." A messenger from the dead, to be intelligible, must describe the unseen world by images drawn from material objects; but inspiration has already selected the most vivid images, both of beauty and splendor, and employed them to represent heaven, and the most terrific objects in nature to shadow forth the world of woe. The only way in which he could deepen the impression already made, would be by multiplying images, and by greater minuteness of detail; but who does not know that "familiarity begets insensibility." Suppose a messenger from the invisible world were now to enter that door, bearing upon his scarred and scathed visage "the marks and numbers" of a lost spirit, we should be startled, petrified, become as dead men, perhaps die; but admit that we were only stunned, as soon as we recovered from the shock, we should be the same men as before. There is nothing in mere affright to soften and subdue the heart into penitence. Men are *drawn*, not *driven*, into the kingdom of heaven.

But then, we must be convinced of a future state of misery, and are we not convinced now? Have we any doubt of the existence of such a being as Jesus Christ, a messenger first from heaven, and next from the dead, and that He taught the doctrine of the final misery of the wicked? But the impression made by one appearing directly before us, would be more vivid, no doubt it would, but what then? Men in the hour of death have sometimes far more vivid impressions of a future state of misery, and of their instant exposure to it, than are ever known in the hey-day of health. They are told by those in whose word they confide, that they can live, at most, but a few hours. In the perfect possession of reason, they feel that except they repent they shall thus soon be *lost, lost forever*, and yet they in such respect certainly give no evidence of the fact. All this merely

reveals the power of the heart over the understanding—merely shows that men can act, and do act, in direct opposition to their strongest convictions of duty and safety. Probably there are no circumstances in which repentance less often occurs, than amidst the phrenzied alarm which sometimes exists in a dying hour—an alarm not remotely resembling the effect which would be produced by the appearance of a messenger from the dead.

The Jews were seized with consternation at the crucifixion of Christ; but as soon as they recovered from the panic, they were the same men as before. It was not till fifty days after when the wild and frantic excitement which destroyed the power of collected and consecutive thought had subsided, that they were in any considerable numbers converted.

The more we look at the subject, the more, I think, will be our common conviction, that a messenger from the dead could make no more impressive disclosures of the world of woe, than God has made in his word. He might tell us that men are not merely exposed to perdition, but some are actually there. The Bible tells us that Judas fell by transgression "that he might go to his own place." What man in his senses believes that that place is heaven! that as he pressed the veil with the blood of the innocent on his heart, a voice from the excellent glory broke upon his ear, "come up hither," and that he went up to take one of the thrones, vacated by the apostasy of the devil and his angels? Believe it who can! We think that with such testimony we should be convinced. We are convinced. Men may pretend that they are not, but God has taken care of that matter. The manifestation of the truth commends itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

But men do not act as if they were convinced. They do not, and yet they do. The Jews were convinced by the miracles of Christ. "What do we for this man doeth many miracles?" What next? "Then from that day forth they took counsel together to put him to death." Men oppose the truth for the very reason that they are convinced, and the more madly the stronger their conviction. Impenitent men will sometimes allege in proof that professors of religion are hypocrites. If we believed as you pretend to in the doctrine of endless misery, we could not hold our peace, we would stop every man that we met, and warn him of his danger. Others will make their own defence, but for myself, whether honest or not, in my Christian profession, one thing I know, so far as I can know any thing, by my own consciousness, that God has given me such conviction of sin as leaves no lurking doubt in my mind as to the truth of the doctrine of the final misery of the wicked. I have no more doubt of this truth, than that there is a God who reigns in righteousness, and if it promised any good, I would stop my fellow sinners at every corner and intercept your way with the angel cry, "woe, woe,

woe," but if on this day, in this place, appealing to the law and the testimony, I cannot convince you of your exposure to endless misery, or at least so convince you as to produce the least practical effect, of what use this abrupt address which at my lips would carry no conviction, and which must provoke either mirth or wrath.

God has made it our duty to "preach the word," to reason out of "the Scriptures;" and if men will not be convinced from this source, He will probably leave them to learn from their own experience what they will not take upon His word; and this leads me to say in the close, that if you continue to neglect present opportunities and misimprove present privileges, your expectations from the future will in all probability disappoint you. God has "magnified his word above all his name." He is jealous for the honor of "the word." He will do nothing in His providence to disparage the preaching of "the word." "By the foolishness of preaching He saveth them that believe." You may look forward to some sudden, startling, overwhelming influence in the hour of death, but you will probably be disappointed. You will then be deprived of reason, or be so paralyzed by disease, as to look the grim messenger in the face, with the vacant stare of fatuity; or should you have "visions and revelations," not of "the third heaven," but of the lowest hell, "unspeakable," which you neither may nor can utter, in the horror of your doom you will "give up the ghost." May God incline you to improve the passing hour as for your life!

SERMON DCXCV.

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A FAITHFUL SAYING.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."—1 Tim. i. 15.

There have been many sayings current in the world, some of which were true and others false; some embodied important principles, others were only specious; some had been transmitted from generation to generation, from age to age, others have been forgotten; some have been practical, evincing great wisdom and knowledge of men and things, others have been unsound, have contained much error and false philosophy.

The apostle speaks of a saying which he affirms to be true and worthy of all attention—it refers to Jesus Christ and the object of his mission. The world had been advised of his coming—many reports were circulated about him as he came to be known. Some originated in jealousy, others in prejudice; some assailed his character, others referred to his designs. It was said that he was low bred because he turned his attention to the poor; many reported that he was a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber because he was occasionally in the society of publicans and sinners. Some charged him with ambition, that he aspired to a crown, others accused him of hypocrisy, that under the garb of innocence he aimed to subvert the Jewish polity and set up a new order of things; that his object was to destroy the law and the prophets. Time—which is a diligent inquirer and a just judge—has exposed all that was false, and confirmed all that was true. His true character, personal and moral, has been "placed under the seal and safegard of death and immortality."

We propose to examine this saying which the apostle has transmitted to us, *what it implies, its claims to truth and general belief.*

I. We inquire *what is implied in this saying?*

1. It is implied that men are *lost.* If it would be absurd to offer life to those who were not dead, it must be equally so to speak of saving those who were not perishing. If man were only in a partially lapsed condition, if his disease were not universal, a less effectual remedy might have answered. The salvation mentioned in the text, as we may gather from other parts of Scripture, is a full and entire deliverance from sin, its guilt, pollution, and power; including exemption from the condemnation of the law, freedom from the whole system of corrupt inclinations—sometimes called *justification of life;* sometimes *the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;* sometimes the putting off the old man with his deeds, and the putting on of the new man. The obvious import of such strong language is, that man, in his native character, is a lost sinner. The apostle drew the same inference because we thus judge, *if one died for all, then were all dead;* if Christ Jesus came to save sinners, then they *needed* a Saviour; he would not have come on a useless errand; they stood in *infinite* need.

2. It is also implied that *their salvation is a work of great difficulty.* The names Christ Jesus, signify the anointed one—one set apart for a particular work. If the work of salvation could have been achieved by any other being in the universe, God had not sent his only Son. The law was broken, its awful penalty was incurred; the justice of God was armed for the destruction of the sinner; who could interpose, arrest the course of justice, set aside the penalty and open a way in which the law could be sustained, divine justice satisfied, the government of Jehovah vindicated, and the sinner saved? To preserve these high interests, and bring in everlasting righteousness was a mighty work. An angel could not accomplish it. When there was no eye to pity, no arm to save, then God brought salvation by laying help on one that is mighty. Infinite wisdom was employed in devising, and infinite power was exerted in executing the plan of salvation. Hence Christ Jesus is called *the wisdom of God and the power of God.* He assumed human nature into personal union with the divine, that as Mediator he might effect a reconciliation. To accom-

plish so difficult a work, he must understand, and take an equal interest in, the character and concerns of both parties. From the relation which he sustained, the place he held, he only could make an end of sin by giving himself a sin offering, he only could magnify the law and make it honorable by his active and passive obedience. When Jesus, therefore, left his Father's bosom, it was on no excursion of pleasure; it was not to wander forth among the worlds that rolled in infinite space to receive their homage; but he came into this revolted province—this world of sin and error and rebellion, to save the orphans that were lying in their blood; to restore the outcasts that were ready to perish; this divine and heavenly work was to be effected, not by the mere energy of his will, not by commissioning an angel or a being of inferior order; but by giving himself in sacrifice—by a life of obedience—by a vicarious death—by bearing our sins in his own body on the tree.

3. It is more than implied, it is affirmed, by the apostle, *that the chief of sinners may be saved.* He does not hesitate to refer to himself, who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious, and yet *the grace of God was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.* Such an instance of grace was designed to illustrate the fullness of divine mercy. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." A pattern is a specimen; in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, the world might see what abundant mercy there is treasured up in Christ. Many an awakened sinner, who might otherwise have given up in despair, has been encouraged by his case to apply to the blood of sprinkling. If one so full of pride and self-righteousness; if such an opposer, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, obtain mercy, the vilest of the vile may be saved.

4. We are also taught by this saying *the infinite grace and love of God.* Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners who deserved to die. Had he been sent to punish them, had he been charged with a commission to execute the sentence of the law, it would have comported with our ideas of justice; but "*God, who is rich in mercy for the great love wherewith he loved us, sent his Son, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.*" Verily God's thoughts are not as our thoughts; nor His ways as our ways. While not many great, not many noble are called, God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom. To show his grace and make his power known, he has often fixed his regards upon the most abandoned, that no flesh might glory in his sight. Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentence. And he is able and willing to save to the uttermost, all who come to God by him.

II. We consider *the propriety of accepting this saying*, or, *its claims to truth and general belief.*

It is a faithful saying; it is true. History substantiates the fact that more than eighteen centuries ago a stranger entered our world, asserting that he was the Son of God, the Messias who was to come. His apostles asserted that he was God manifest in the flesh. Great numbers believed on him—entrusted to him the interests of their souls. The truth of this

saying is identified with the truth of the Bible. It is interwoven in all its parts. The great object of the Bible is to illustrate the character and unfold the mission of the Son of God. All the proofs of the divine origin of the sacred Scriptures go to support this saying.

It is proved *by the fulfilment of prophecy*. Predictions the most minute and convincing were accomplished—predictions which no human foresight could have suggested—which no human power could have brought about. These prophecies related to different and opposite events; to distant times, to the character, birth-place, life and death of the Saviour; to the fortunes of his visible kingdom. To make a selection out of a great variety, we refer to the fullness of time when Christ was to appear. Many striking predictions were fulfilled by that event. It was foretold by Jacob in his dying moments, that it was to take place before political power departed from Judah. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." The Messiah appeared at that critical period. Roman guards and Roman courts, just then established, proved that the sceptre had departed from Judah and the lawgiver from between his feet. It was predicted by the prophet Haggai that Christ should come during the existence of the second temple: "In this place will I give peace." There appeared the Prince of peace, preaching the gospel of peace. It was foretold, moreover, that his coming should be within "seventy weeks" from the period marked out by Daniel; at whatever time the computation commences, they have long since elapsed. The place where he was to be born, his parentage, the most minute circumstances were pointed out, ages before he appeared. The only correct inference from all this is: "Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

The truth of this saying is proved by *the agreement of the types and antetype*. The types were shadows of good things to come: symbolic prophecies. They strengthen the former argument. When we read of the paschal lamb slain in Egypt, each family feeding upon it; of the blood sprinkled upon the door-posts, we see a very significant emblem of Christ our passover, sacrificed for us, whose blood, while it cleanses from all sin, is a defence against the angel of the second death. When we read of the scape-goat on whose head was laid the sins of the people, which he bore into the wilderness, we have no obscure representation of Him who bore our sins in his own body on the tree. Among the types we find the prophet Jonah three days and nights in the whale's belly, which an inspired interpreter has told us prophesied of Christ, who was to be confined an equal length of time in the grave. Such remarkable coincidences evince the influence of a pervading spirit, at once dictating the types and securing their fulfillment.

The truth of this saying is further attested by *miracles*. Without referring now to the train of miracles by which the mission of Moses was established, (Deut. xxxiv. 10–12,) we confine our attention to the signs and wonders by which Christ and his apostles were approved of God as special messengers of the truth. Christ, in his own name, and by his own underived power, and the apostles, by virtue of his Spirit resting upon them, controlled the laws of nature by a word. Their mighty works were not done in a corner. Their number and publicity gave all an opportunity of an examination. Hence an apostle, addressing the Jewish people, said

that Jesus Christ was approved by signs and miracles which were done among them *as they also knew*. A man who could heal the sick by a word, raise the dead, cast out devils, still the raging sea, furnished evidence that God was with him; consequently that his messages were inspired. A cloud of *witnesses* have also attested the truth of this saying—witnesses in heaven and on earth. Says John—"There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth—the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." That Jesus is the Son of God is fully attested by his baptism, in water, and by his blood, or death, followed by his resurrection, the miraculous power of God confirming this great fundamental article of our faith on both occasions. And the Holy Spirit, whose attestations are absolute truth and veracity, attested his divine mission by his miracles, by his resurrection, by the miraculous powers with which the Apostles were endowed, and even now in the illuminating and sanctifying influences of th Spirit on the hearts of Christians.

Other witnesses have testified to the truth of this saying. Thousands in every age who have been convinced of sin, of their lost condition, have trusted in him for salvation. When ready to perish, he has interposed and saved them. By a life of faith, by resisting temptation, by divine consolation in affliction, by victory over death—they have borne witness that Jesus was mighty to save. It *is* a true saying, and thousands more will attest its truth.

2. *It is worthy of all acceptation.* A saying may be true, and still be unimportant. But this embodies the most interesting truth: to know and believe which is life eternal. It has as much interest and value at one time as another. In every part of this revolted world this report should be circulated and received. The truth contained in it is adapted to the condition and circumstances of *all* men, for all have sinned and need a Saviour. Such a saying, bearing the seal of Heaven, whose truth and importance have been fully tested by such multitudes in every age, is worthy of *cordial*, *unqualified*, and *immediate acceptation*.

It should be *cordially* received. The nature and claims of a report should decide the *manner* of its reception. If it refer to abstract truth, to some distant or unimportant event, it may be believed, but no special interest will be awakened, no emotion will be felt; but when it is announced that the Son of God became flesh, and dwelt among us; that he came to seek and to save that which is lost, were there nothing to blunt the sensibilties and pervert the mind, the most deep and lively interest would be manifested. Were we to hear of peace after a long and ruinous war; or the favorable termination of a cause in which we were deeply concerned, we should receive the tidings with grateful emotion. How then should we receive the tidings of the Gospel, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace and good will to men;" "That God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

When it was proclaimed amidst the struggles of the Revolution that a peer of France, powerfully allied, possessed of an ample fortune, had landed upon our shores, determined to devote himself and his all to the service of liberty; such a generous act called forth one universal burst of admiration; even grave senators could not repress their tears of joy. How should the intelligence be received, not that an earthly noble, but a heavenly King—God's only Son—had come into our world, not to be honored, but to humble himself; not merely to be exposed to hardship, but to be crucified, to die an ignominious death, prompted solely by love? When it is ascertained beyond a doubt that he accomplished the object of his mission, changed the aspect of the world, opened a door of hope, appeased the wrath of heaven—will not every heart be opened to receive the message?

This saying is worthy of *unqualified acceptation*. Christ Jesus came to *save* sinners: to turn away every one of us from our sins. The terms of salvation are explicit and benevolent. They are of the same character with the message. We must renounce our sins and pleasures, the world, and every evil thing, because they are a fruitful source of sorrow. If self-moved, the Son of God came to our world on such an errand of love, it should be left to him to settle the terms of salvation. How absurd for those who have ruined themselves, who are under sentence of condemnation, to attempt to modify the ground of pardon! In view of the great interests of God's kingdom, of the highest happiness of sinners themselves, in view of all concerned, Jesus Christ has said, that whosoever would be his disciple and share in his mercy, and hope to be saved in heaven, he must *deny himself, and take up his cross—he must forsake all that he hath*. And heaven and earth shall pass away before one tittle of the gospel shall change. Never were terms more suitable. They are simply that we come in our *real* character, as lost sinners—that we honor him as the only Saviour: and then, no matter how numerous or aggravated our sins, they shall be forgiven, and our names be written in the book of life.

It is worthy of *immediate* acceptation. It is addressed to those who are in imminent danger; who are lying under the curse of a broken law; whose hearts are depraved, and are therefore unmeet for the kingdom of heaven. Danger cannot be *too soon* escaped; the evil too soon averted. The message relates to a momentous concern—it deserves *immediate* attention. No matter what our condition in this life—no matter what our age, or how pressing our engagements—we are directed to seek *first* the kingdom of God. While we are in an unconverted state, while under the dominion of selfishness, we cannot please God. The gospel publishes pardon to the guilty, salvation to the lost—why then should we defer acceptance of the terms, when life is so uncertain, and an evil heart of unbelief is so dangerous? God is sincere in sending this message to us. He says, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Every thing depends upon our acceptance of it. "He that believeth not, shall be damned." "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul." Prudence, reason, self-interest, the word and Spirit of God, the triumphant and the despairing death-beds of sinners, all dictate and urge to an *immediate* acceptation of the gospel. Lay hold on eternal life.

I address multitudes to-day who have heard this saying ten thousand times, but it has been as an idle tale. Is it a *true* saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners? and how can you reject it? Gratitude should prompt to an acceptance. When guilt, like a heavy cloud, hung over our world, ready to burst upon us—when the wrath of God was kindled against us—when earth, smitten with the curse, gave signs that all was lost—then the Lord Jesus Christ came into our world, took upon him our nature, obeyed the divine law, endured its penalty, yielded up his life on the cross, that we might live. Are your hearts steeled against *such* love? "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ did for us." O listen to his kind invitation this day, though you might justly be left to perish, and *might* expect the minister of death to vindicate slighted mercy and abused goodness, still the voice of love is addressed to you, "*turn ye, why will ye die.*" How long will ye refuse to yield your hearts to Christ? Recollect under what circumstances I stand before you, as an ambassador of Christ. I place before you life and death; if you reject this message, it is at your peril. God is concerned for the honor of his Son. Such grace as that offered in the gospel, necessarily involves the deepest responsibility. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? Think of the guilt you contract by rejecting this gospel. You reject the *truth* of God; for it is a faithful saying; every line of it is true, and sealed with God's seal; you are reflecting upon the wisdom and goodness of God, for it is worthy of all acceptation; your every interest, for this world and the next, for time and eternity, is involved in it; in refusing to believe, you sin against your own soul. The objects for which you are about to barter your immortal interests, are vanishing away. Soon you will be left, devoid of comfort; youth and beauty fled; pleasures and honors gone; friends and companions removed; the world a blank; the soul unsaved; defiled with sin; stung with remorse; before you, an undone eternity—above you, an offended God—behind you, a misspent life. O the guilt and folly of unbelief! Is there no way to arouse you to reflection? Has a sleep—the prelude of eternal death—fallen upon you? O that you were wise—that you would accept the offer of life. Two worlds concentrate their interests here. Now is the accepted time.

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SERMON DCXCVI.

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IT IS GOOD FOR A MAN THAT HE BEAR THE YOKE IN HIS YOUTH.

"It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth."—LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH iii. 27.

YES, it is good for a man, that he bear the yoke—bear it always: not in his youth only, but in his manhood, and old age, bear it, and carry it, patiently and cheerfully all his life.

Youth, we will all admit, is the forming period of human character—the time when impulse and restraint—when check and spur—when indolence and effort are most largely influential for good or evil over our future condition and destiny. And yet, it is true, that always, and everywhere, and under all conditions, the will of man must bow to a Higher Will: it must submit itself to an omnipotence mightier than its own. Man must always acknowledge a Law—a Sovereign—a Might and a Right, out of, and above himself, or he fails in the healthful and proper unfolding of his nature: he loses the dignity and nobleness of his humanity. His life and character, without this, take a wrong direction—a twist, a gnarl, a bend, which distorts and deforms both. Man must always be governed and restrained. Look at a child! It has hardly gained strength to erect and hold itself up, before its will expresses itself in actions and wishes which show you *how* much the neck of childhood needs, absolutely needs a yoke, a curb—a rein—a guiding and controlling power to keep that child in the

right way—to check it when it goes wrong, and to discipline it unto subjection to the law of right and duty, rather than the law of self-will and inclination. But does the child outgrow the need of this yoke? Does he not grow stronger, and sturdier, and firmer set in the opposition of his will, to all wholesome advices and restraints? Is not this the natural tendency? And the young man, full of the ardor and impulse characteristic of his age, does he not need a yoke—a disciplinary and controlling power of some kind? Where would his passions, his temper, his appetites, hurry him, blindfold and headlong had he no safeguard—no check or restraint? And the man, the wise, sagacious, practical man, who has outlived the follies and fervors of youth, has he, therefore, outlived the necessity of imposing upon the neck of his inclinations and passions a yoke—a bond—a fastening to hold him to the law of duty, and high and holy endeavor, rather than to the law of self-indulgence and self-interest? And the old man—the very old man—who has passed his seventy or eighty mile-stones on his way to the realm of the dead, will it do for him to throw off the yoke? Is it safe for him to unloose from his neck the reins—to throw off all the restraints human and divine laws impose upon him? If it were safe—if the law of right had become the fixed law of this life—if his steps have been so confirmed in the paths of virtue and piety that they could not stray into wrong or forbidden paths—yet still does the old man need this yoke as much as ever. Does not age, with its infirmities and dependence—with its temptations to complaint and fretfulness—to irritability and impatience, and misanthropy, need the wholesome restraints of the Christian Yoke, to hold it uncomplaining and unmurmuring on its declining way—to keep it calm, and patient, and serene, and hopeful, till the last great change shall come, and death itself shall unloose the yoke.

But need I stop here to argue the truth of the sentiment expressed in the text—*that all men*—but especially the young, do need, imperatively need, some sort of discipline and restraint—some coercion of their own wills—a yoke to bind and fasten their activities and energies in the right line of endeavor—to regulate and restrain all their faculties of thinking, willing, and doing within the right path—the grand highroad of religious duty that leads to God and blessedness. Will not every honest mind acknowledge, and that, too, with a strength of conviction forced from the profoundest depths of self-consciousness, that the human soul is in a disordered, wayward, and fallen state—wrong in all its natural propensions, and passions, and dispositions, and, therefore, unfit to guide and govern itself—unable, without a leader and a guide, *out of itself* to begin or end the journey of life aright.

While man was a sinless being—while he was a dweller beneath the clear sky of Paradise—his faculties did all spontaneously de-

velope themselves, in exact and beautiful harmony with the law of holiness and love, through which God in His beneficence and wisdom works out the happiness of His intelligent creatures throughout the vast universe. But in laying down rules for the conduct of life *now*—in chalking out the course of education and discipline which will best develope his nature—we must never forget that that nature *now*, is nature in its fallen state—a nature inclined to evil—a nature which though upright as God made it, it has by the abuse of its free-agency, by voluntary transgression, ruined and disabled its original powers and capabilities for good—a nature, which though jarred and disordered in all its higher and nobler instincts, still it is a nature which God our Father seeks to restore again unto Himself, and to the dominion of his own most holy law by the discipline of labor, trial, suffering, and the still higher discipline of the cross.

Human life is educational and disciplinary. It is a period of probation and preparation. Nor can we understand all its grand ends and uses, till we have fully grasped the idea of its *why* and *wherefore* upon the earth. Improvement, and not enjoyment, ought to be the end and aim of our lives.

"Life is combat—life is striving,
Such our destiny below!
Like a scythed chariot driving
Through an onward pressing foe,
Deepest sorrow, scorn and trial,
Will but teach us self-denial!
Like the Alchemists of old—
Pass the ore through cleansing fire;
If our spirits would aspire,
To be God's refined gold."

Correction, amendment, right moral and spiritual development is the true business, and ought to be the great labor and struggle of our earthly life. Earth, this sin-shadowed earth, is the place for labor and toil. Heaven, the holy and calm heaven, the place for rest and fruition. And he who strives and expects to find rest and enjoyment only in this life, but lays himself to sleep upon a bed of roses, whose thorns will sooner or later pierce him to the quick. Labor, discipline, and the patient wearing of the yoke, is the true way of life—a way whose ending is lost amid the beatitudes and blessedness of heaven. But the human soul prefers to follow its own impulses. It dislikes to submit its own will to any higher will. Subjection is painful to it. Domination, rule and power over others, it delights in. It dislikes obedience. It spurns labor. Wayward, self-loving, and self-willed, it seeks its own, and not that which promotes the happiness of others, or even its own highest ultimate good.

And how shall a young soul, setting forth on the journey of life, be *broken in*—be habituated to bit, and bridle, and check—

to the healthful, and wise restraints of virtue and goodness? When shall the taming and training process begin? Can it be commenced and carried forward hopefully, unless it is begun early —begun in youth? With the Prophet, we believe it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth. Perhaps no greater calamity can befal a young man, than to be *lord of himself*—his own master—to acknowledge no will, no law, no authority, higher or more obligatory than his own. This was one of the main elements of Lord Byron's misfortunes—one of the most productive sources of that waywardness and self-will, which marred and spoiled his whole life. Speaking of Lara, whose father died when he was but a child, he says:

"Left by his sire, too young such loss to know,
Lord of himself, that heritage of woe,
That fearful empire which the human breast,
But holds, to rob the heart within of rest,
With none to check—and few to point in time
The thousand paths that slope the way to crime!
Then, when most required commandment—then—
Had Lara's daring boyhood govern'd men.
It skills not—boots not—step by step to trace
His youth through all the mazes of the race.
Short was the course its restlessness had run,
But, long enough, to leave him half undone."

Now here we have the secret element of all that frowardness which manifested itself in so many ungainly forms in the life and history of that majestic but erring man. And we may lay it down as an axiom that whenever we find a youth restiff under wise and just restraints, or irreverent and reckless of the opinion or good feelings of others, there is an obliquity in the moral nature of that youth, that will, sooner or later, unless checked, work out evil and sorrow to himself and others. In Byron's own words, to be *lord of ones-self*—to own no interest, no law and no restraint, but his own self-will—is to a youth, a "heritage of woe." And hence, indeed, one of the deepest sources of sympathy for the young, who in early life are deprived of a father's wise and kind restraints.

But let us enquire concerning that discipline—that particular and peculiar kind of yoke, that can manage and shape human life and character aright, so as finally to evolve the perfection and symmetry of the soul, bring it ultimately into everlasting harmony with goodness, the end of its creation. Let us begin with the beginning of life and notice in their natural order the several yokes, which all human souls must successively put on and wear, according to their age and condition, before the habits of the soul's life can be permanently conformed to the law of holiness—the law of its happiness.

First, then, the yoke that must be put on the earliest is, the yoke of parental obedience—implicit, unquestioning obedience.

And grievously does that parent sin against God and the soul of the child God has committed to his care, if he neglects to enforce daily and habitually this great law of his child's social and moral welfare. Is it not a melancholy sight—indeed, does it not excite one's indignation and pity—when you see, as one often does see, a spoiled and petted child—the little tyrant of the family, governing and ruling both the father and the mother—subjecting them to its capricious will—making them the pitiable slaves of a foolish and mismanaged child—a four or five year old despot! How often do you see a child you could have loved, had it been left unspoiled in the innocence and childish simplicity of its nature, and trained to that teachableness, and obedience, which always mark an interesting and promising childhood. But sit half an hour in that family circle! See how concerned and timidly the mother puts forth her commands, fearful they shall be openly disobeyed and she be put to shame by her young child in the presence of strangers. And mark the egotistic teasing, selfish, obstinate, overbearings of the young one. By turns it is noisy—by turns fretful and sullen—a being, which God gave as a blessing, a light, a very joy to that family home, has by the ill-timed indulgence and mismanagement of its parents, been changed and metamorphosed into a shame and a reproach, and a prophet of future evil to itself and others. Alas! how has the glorious image of God, stamped upon that young child's nature, been defaced by a bad and foolish home training! You can plainly see that instead of the seeds of kindness, gentleness, modesty, and self-control, cast by parental hands into that young soul before you, the dragon's teeth have been sown. You cannot smile upon such a child kindly. You cannot speak to such a child lovingly. Its frowardness and self-will repel you. And when *you*—when others—when patient and painstaking instructors of the young, all turn away with a moral aversion from this unhappy victim of parental mismanagement and folly, who will pity and help it? Who, indeed, will or can? Shall we hope that some kind angel—some unseen, unearthly one, from the realm of the blessed—some guardian genius, such as of old men did believe watched over children and folded around them the wings of protecting love, shall watch and wait, and find some period, some favorable hour, to throw over that young child's nature, the regenerating and renovating forces of a lovelier and more genial life? Shall we dare to hope, that that work which is the father's and mother's work, shall be done by any other than the father's and mother's own hands? Shall we expect the blessing of the God of Families upon that household where the father and the mother, instead of being the priest and priestess of the household, are its victims—where, instead of keeping the yoke of a wise and gentle obedience around the necks of their children, they wear the yoke of a child tyrant around their own? Solemn, indeed, and heavy is the re-

sponsibility of the office of the instructors and educators of the young. Oh! they do need wisdom, and patience, and Divinest sympathy to fit them and sustain them in their toilsome and difficult work. How much of authoritativeness and absolute command must be exercised in that small kingdom, a school-room, where twenty, thirty, forty, or a hundred active and inquisitive young minds are ever on the stretch to know or to do some new thing.

And here, too, the youth who has been trained to habits of docility and submission in the home government of the family, who has worn naturally, and gracefully, and reverently, the yoke of parental authority, is most likely to be benefitted by the efforts of an industrious and conscientious instructor. Oh! how unfit for the relative duties and business of life, is that young man or woman, who in the discipline of the family and the school has never been accustomed to wear the yoke of a dutiful and loving obedience! My young friends—you who are scholars and learners—you who now hear me, let me speak plainly and frankly to you. Is it not better and infinitely more becoming for a manly and noble boy, or a large-hearted and good girl, to say I will reverence and obey my parents; I will look up with respect and confidence to my teachers and parents, whose instructions and advice, if I heed them, can make me wiser and better. Is not this, I ask you, better than to be an obstinate, indocile, and unloveable girl, or a coarse, bold, bad and obstinate boy—the Anarch of the family—gruff and coarse, and unmannerly, mistaking impudence for manliness, and a vulgar swaggering air for the deportment of a gentleman. It is a most common error, and a dangerous one it is, that schools and masters are *the* educators of our youth. Their instructors they are: but their educators in the high, and holy sense of the word they are not. The training of the feet, and of the hands, and of the eye, and the ear, by music masters, and dancing masters, and drawing masters, is not education. The knowledge of the ancient and modern languages, and the sciences and fine arts, as taught by the best and most accomplished instructors is not education. That is something which neither the schools, nor books, nor masters, can give. The body is trained, and in many cases trained well, and so is the intellect. It is plied with tasks, and books, and lectures, and made strong, and sharp, and wise, and fit for the all absorbing ends of life; that is, for buying and selling, and making merchandize, and the accumulation of material good. But where are the professors of benevolence, justice, truth, temperance, humanity, charity, and piety? Where are these accomplishments taught? Who studies them? What are the text books? Where are the institutions and professors of these, of all accomplishments the most exalted, because the divinest? You, my hearers, let me say to you respectfully, who are parents are these professors, and your homes the insti-

tutions where piety, and justice, and benevolence, and humanity are to be taught, not from lectures, and homilies, and catechisms merely, but from the mystic book of your own daily lives. Not in colleges and halls of science, but in your households, you the father and the mother being the educators, and your lives and example the lessons.

But when the young have passed the period of training and tutelage in the family and in the school, have they then done with the yoke? Is it proper for them to cast off all obedience to restraint and authority? Far from it. There come yet harder lessons to be learned—there are severer rules to be obeyed—there is another yoke ready for the neck, and happy is the youth who is ready to bear it patiently and truly. It is the yoke of work, labor, industry—the burden which the occupations and professions of active life impose; and this yoke all must bear, as they value the peace, prosperity, and dignity of their future lives.

There are not, as some persons seem to think, a few favored children of the earth—the destined heirs of good fortune—the hereditary owners of such broad domains and ample resources, that they can afford to make life a long sunny day, an everlasting Saturday, a schoolboy's holiday. If any do have the vanity to live an easy, laborless life, without effort of any kind, without the application of their powers to some good and useful purpose, they soon fall into public contempt and personal littleness, no matter what their surroundings or position may be. Because a young man or a young woman is born to affluence, is that any good reason why he or she should be vain or idle? Is it not, indeed, the very strongest reason why they should strive by energy and perseverance in some noble line of endeavor to build up a personal character, in some degree commensurate with the outward fortunes which the good providence of God has given them to enjoy?

No, my young friends, if you would be truly influential and respected, labor diligently, and with all your skill and might in whatever industrial employment or profession the good providence of God has called you to work. This is duty.* There is true honor and dignity in this. No employment is mean which is honestly and industriously pursued. When the enemies of Epaminondas, one of the most renowned men of his age, appointed him a street scavinger, "*If my office*," said he, "*will not do me honor, I will do honor to my office.*" And so he did, by the

* Alas! there is a most morbid dislike for work among all classes—and as morbid a wish to be gentlemen. I have seen it stated that recently in Boston, an advertisement for a young man to work in a store, had 18 applicants; while one for a gentleman to travel and play on the banjo received 409. I say work. It is honorable. There is true dignity in it.

conscientious and careful manner in which he discharged its appropriate but humble duties. An industrious man is usually a virtuous man. Hercules was an honest worker. His draining of marshes, and punishment of tyrants, and destruction of serpents and wild beasts, what are they, and the thousand and one fables told of him, but the fact that he was a true benefactor of his race, an improver of the social condition of men. The idler has never yet done any thing for the world's good; and in no one instance has his name, like to Vulcan's, or Hercules', or Orpheus', or Arachnes's been embalmed in mythus. It has rotted from among the memories of the ages. Bear the yoke of labor in your youth. Ours is a work-day world. Its only oasis is the Sabbath. Cherish that. *But work. Work for yourself. Work for your family. Work for the world.*

But you say, I do not know how to begin; I want capital; I want friends; I do not know how, or where, or when to set out, and make a beginning. Well then, these are embarassing difficulties to be sure. But I do not know that it is right to say it is a hard condition; for this is but another yoke which it is good for a young man to bear in his youth—the yoke of adverse and straitened circumstances and conditions of life, for it is nobler to achieve ones fortunes, with God's good providence aiding, than to inherit them—nobler to acquire energy, and strength, and self-reliance, and manly independence of character by a severe and close combat with the evils and disadvantages of outward social condition, than to run the risk of being enervated and personally insignificant by entire reliance upon friends and influence, and capital which others have accumulated for you.

But when the young have learned the great laws of obedience and industry, is that all? Must the neck still bow itself to receive other yokes or restraints? It must. For men are not only members of families, and workers, and producers, in this great world-hive; but as youth merges into manhood, they become members of states and of civil communities, they become citizens. And now the yoke of subjection to civil authority must be borne with a self-sacrificing and patriotic spirit. But when the family and the school have done their proper and legitimate work, the state finds the majority of her subjects order-loving, obedient, and willing and ready to come up to to her help, in maintaining law and order, and the mercantile blessings of peace and good government. But from whence come her outlawed and disobedient children, who crowd her prisons, her jails, and poor-houses, and penitentiaries? Do they not come from disorderly, ill-governed, and mismanaged households—from dwellings where the Sabbath was a weariness, where religion was turned out of doors, where all their members lived as seemed to them best in their own eyes, and their youths were lords of themselves?

But, finally, is this all? Does obedience to parents—respect to instructors—diligence in some honest and useful calling, and loyalty to the State comprehend the whole of our duties as men? Are there no other yokes? Is there any other yoke, the assumption and bearing of which will not afflict and constrain, but set the young man free and lift him up into the full and joyful consciousness of entire personal freedom—perfect emancipation from the power and thraldom of all that is gross, or degrading, or evil in the tendencies of his nature, a perfect freedom to will and to do that which is right, and well-pleasing before God? Yes, there is such a yoke—a yoke worn by devout and good men without irritation, and without constraint—a yoke which is easy, and a burden which is light. *It is the yoke of Christ.* It is the yoke Christ offers to all his true and willing disciples through all the ages. *Wear but that yoke, now, and heaven will be all around you.* It is because men do not wear that yoke, that earth is earth —a low, dark, world of sin and suffering. Oh! glorious, indeed, would this house of our human life be, did we all but live as the children of God; obedient, trustful, fraternal, loving children of the same great household of human souls, bound each to each, and all to God our Father, by the blessed and everlasting bonds of faith and love! Did every man but wear this yoke, its redemption would be achieved. Order and peace, and the holy calm of the holy worlds would fall upon the human race, and earth be but one of the majestic apartments—one of the glorious rooms in our Father's house of many mansions.

Do you ask me what is this yoke of Christ's? I answer. It is the life—the spirit—the temper—the love of Christ. It is humility; it is forbearance; it is faith; it is charity; it is meekness; it is forgivingness: in one word, it is self-consecration—the consecration of your thoughts, your words, your bodies, your entire life unto God, a living sacrifice. This is what Christ your Redeemer, God manifest in the flesh, taught to his disciples and the world. It is the giving up of your will to him who "willed and all things were." It is the yielding up of your heart to that mighty heart of love, pulsating from the centre to the farthest verge of being; the God who made you, and the throbbings of whose love to you, you may hear in every beat of that heart of yours, and feel it in every generous and uplifting aspiration, that struggles in your soul for utterance and expression. Tell me, my young friend, when is a boy the loveliest? Is it not when confidingly and trustful he walks, hand in hand, unquestioningly beneath the care of a wise and loving father, his will resigned to his father's will, his father's smile his joy, his father's word the law of his conduct, his father's life the model of his own. Oh, how happy that boy is! Happy in his father's love, happy in his own obedient, loving spirit. Heaven is all around him, for the heaven of trust and love is within him. And so, too, will it be

with you, if as the children of God's mercy and providence you wear the yoke of obedience to the will of your Father in heaven—if, like Jesus, you strive to do, not your own will, but your Father's will—if like Him you put forth a brave trust in providence—if like Him you grapple with the trials, and toils, and duties of life, as the ordained instruments of spiritual strength and perfection—if like Him, though you could "call down legions of angels," you go calmly to the dungeon, rather than give again blow for blow, or railing for railing, or "controlment for controlment," heaven will be around you, for the heaven of love and trust will be within you. Wear this yoke. Yes, wear it. And the promise is, "you shall find rest unto your souls." Rest then is the reward of wearing it. And what a blessing and what a reward it is! Ask the sick man what it is? Ask the thought-worn scholar, who has toiled till his brain has become hot and his pulse fluttering, what it is? Ask the seaman battling for his life with winds and waves, and the terrible phantoms of death striding along the boiling waters, what it is? Ask the conscience-haunted man—the man around whom the ghosts of remembered wrongs glide awfully silent, ask him what it is? Ah! it is rest—rest the sick man wants—the seaman wants—the sinner wants. It is rest we all want; rest from toil, rest from sin, rest from temptation, rest from the wrongs and evils of others. It is the cry of the human, We are weary! We are burdened! We are unhappy! Rest! Rest! Rest! We want rest! And it is, and it will be the cry of the human, ringing and reëchoing for ever through all realms and through all ages, until it is found in God and obedience to His will. "Bear this yoke," ye youth, "for a while, when you are young, that you may be free when you are old, that you may walk through life unmanacled by passions, unchained by lusts, spurning the lash of Satan, and deriding the bondage of sin, that you may come to that holy and happy land where no yoke is borne, where the souls of just men are illumined with amazing glory, and compassed round about by the holiness of God."* In the language of Gilfillan, in his Third Gallery of Portraits, "Almost all the powers and elements of nature, combine in teaching man the one great simple word, 'bend.' 'Bend!' the winds say it to the tall pines, and they gain the curve of their magnificence by obeying. 'Bend,' gravitation says it to the earth, as she sweeps in her course round the sun, and she knows the whisper of his ruler, and stoops and bows before the skyey blaze. 'Bend,' the proud portals of human knowledge say it to all aspirants; and were it the brow of a Bacon or a Newton, it must in reverence bow. 'Bend,' the doors, the ancient doors of heaven say it in the music of their golden hinges, to all who would pass therein. And the Son of Man Himself, although he could have prayed to

* Sidney Smith.

His Father, and presently obtained twelve legions of angels, had to learn obedience, to suffer, to bow the head, ere as a king of glory He entered in. 'Trust thyself.' No! Christianity says, *mistrust thyself—trust God.* Do thy humble duty, and call the while on the lofty help that is above thee."

May God bless you all, young men,* and help you to wear Christ's yoke which is easy, and to bear his burden which is light.

SERMON DCXCVII.

BY REV. JOSEPH McKEE,

NEW YORK.

THE LAW OF INFLUENCES.†

"Am I my brother's keeper?"—GENESIS iv. 9.

MAN is a social being. An isolated state is an unnatural state. The life of the solitary and the hermit is a moral solecism in the history of society. We are bound to each other by many a mystic tie. Sever but one of these ties and the soul is unhappy. We can hardly conceive of a more pitiable object, than that of a man who feels himself an outcast from the sympathies and regards of his fellow-men—an outlaw from the love of God and the friendship of men. It is not good for man to be alone. God hath made his human children brethren. He hath made every man his brother's keeper. This is a most cheering and consolatory fact in the moral organization of society, but it is also a fact of the most impressive character. This relationship of soul to soul and heart to heart does involve responsibilities and issues, awing and deep as the depths of eternity.

The moral constitution of man and of human society most impressively tells us, that God will not hold *him* guiltless who worketh injury or hurt to his brother, for though the earth may hide and cover up that wrong, that injury, that evil deed—be it what it may—hide in the deepest depths of secresy every mark of that deed, yet is there an eye that looketh ever into that man's face, and a voice that ever calls to him, "*Where is thy brother—what hast thou done unto him?*" His sin finds him out. It drags him a guilty, fear-haunted man before the tribunal of immutable and eternal justice. We may not and cannot evade the corresponding obligations, which the moral and social relations that bind us to each other, do impose upon us.

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* Preached before the young men of Rev. Dr. Scott's Church, Newark, Nov. 18, 1855.

† Preached in the Allen-street Presbyterian Church, New York, Jan. 30, 1848.

In the struggle of life, the august Ruler and Judge of human actions has linked the great army of humanity shoulder to shoulder, and rank to rank, by mutual helps and mutual wants, so teaching us we should be mutually useful and helpful to each other.

And either helpful or harmful we are. No one stands so completely alone as to be without power over others for good or for bad. And no one stands so far removed from the influence of others, as to receive neither benefit nor injury from their influences over himself. We cannot live without influencing others, and others influencing us. Human society is a vast network of reciprocal influences. Every body acts, and is acted upon in turn. Every man helps to mould and fashion the character and destiny of every other man within the sphere of his attractions. It is this power of action and reaction—this reciprocity of moral influences that makes every man, to some extent, his brother's keeper.

I am not made a ruler and an overseer over my brother's household, or over his business. I am not responsible for the preservation of his health, or the integrity of his estate. These must depend upon himself, and on the great general laws over which I have no control. I have nothing to do with them. But I am responsible for the influence I may exercise over the health of his soul—of making or marring his condition in that vast and solemn future that lies in its awful stillness before us. I am responsible for the good or bad I have taught him, by my example, my conversation, and my daily walk and life. I am responsible too, for whatever of evil in his person, character, or estate, he may have suffered directly or indirectly from me, through the instrumentality of others.

I shall endeavor to unfold these views of human relationship and responsibility.

I. And first: I remark that this law of spiritual influences—this reciprocity of action and reaction in the moral world is universal. It is an admitted law in the psychology of our spiritual nature, as certain and invariable in its workings as the laws of matter and motion in the material world. Every effort of the mind we put forth has in it an energy which may be felt by other minds, numbers without number, reproducing itself in endless and ever widening circles of action.

There is a moulding process going forward in churches, in families, in schools, in all the busy places of trade and commerce, in the very streets—a play of moral affinities between mind and mind, and heart and heart, invisible, it is true, as the affinities that preside over chemical changes and phenomena, but equally sure in working out its legitimate results. When I throw a stone into a quiet lake, it produces a series of concentric circles, widening

as they depart from the centre, until the disturbing force seems lost or spent by the resistance of the water. But when I can no longer detect these circles, is that force spent or annihilated? No such thing. Feeble as it seems, it goes on and on to increase the momentum of the waters of the lake. This is intelligibly and plainly illustrated by that law in physics, entitled the hydrostatic paradox, according to which, any force, however small, impressed upon any confined mass of water, however large, is communicated to every drop in that entire mass, each acting and reacting on each until the whole is in motion. You lay your hand on ocean. Its pressure affects every drop of that world of waters. You wave your hand in the air—that motion disturbs the entire atmospheric mass. True, you are not conscious it is so. You cannot see these wavelets or circles. They are no objects of your senses, but where the senses fail to aid you, you can bring the higher instruments of analysis and enquiry to their assistance—instruments which exhibit to us results both wonderful and impressive.

A distinguished savant in making experiments on the Lake of Geneva, for telegraphic purposes, found that the blow of the hammer of a bell, struck under water, put in motion the entire water of the Lake, a weight equivalent to three hundred thousand millions of pounds of water, every drop of which moved in its turn—each acting and reacting on the other, and that too with an energy sufficient to affect a thin iron plate connected with his instrument, on the other side of the lake, a distance of twenty-seven miles, and so as to cause it to sound.

Indeed, if the doctrine of permanent impressions, as expounded by the author of the Ninth Bridgewater Treatise, be true, every impulse communicated by a man's hand to the ocean, or the earth; nay, every undulation of the air, occasioned even by his voice, produces a succession of waves which nothing short of the annihilation of matter can stop.

Now, we say a similar law obtains in the statics of the soul. Every man's moral nature presses on every other man's moral nature with a definite intensity. Our actions and influence are not confined simply to those immediately around us. They travel on to infinity. They affect others we have never seen—others who are to live long after we are dead and forgotten by the living.

The liberty, laws, and institutions of this country, are, for example, the results of the thoughts and lives of men we have never seen. We inherit their thoughts. We are what they have made us as a nation. The same too may be said of the youth of a family, of a school, and of a neighborhood. Their characters, attainments, and conduct are, to a large extent, the worked-out results of the companions and circumstances with which they are surrounded. And what is true in this limited case is true the world over. The words spoken by a man in a public lecture room or

the newspaper paragraph he indites, may affect hundreds of minds in China, in India, in Africa, or the Isles of the Sea. It may set in train a series of actions that will travel on, and on, and on, for ever! It is this that invests a man's actions and character with a significance both awing and limitless. This truth, indeed, sometimes stands out before the world's eye in gigantic proportions. Every age produces some master mind—some man "in shape and gesture proudly eminent," influencing for good or evil the destinies of millions of his race. Moses for example was one of these men.

And when the imagination stretches itself away back into the shadows of the past, that venerable sage, standing with his rod by the rock of Horeb, or coming down the rugged steeps of Sinai to the congregated hosts of Israel, amid the awful thunderings and lightnings, and the still more awful trumpet voices that accompanied the delivery of the moral law—that venerable sage is the most commanding figure which the past presents to the mind's eye—a prophet, a warrior, a poet, a legislator—the only man of all our race that talked with God, as friend talks with friend—a teacher of religion, who though dead, still speaks to us of chaos, and creation, and the world wide flood, that swept away the elder brothers of our race.

Hume was another of those men that have "towered with Atlantæn shoulders" far above their fellows. But he stood among them as the fabled Java tree, beneath whose shadow no creature can live, and round and about which the bones of the dead lie bleaching in the sun-light. Those irreligious trains of thought he set in motion, are drifting, and will drift for ever, through thousands of minds in many lands, peopling them with spectred doubts and deep fixed scepticism. The man may die out of the memory of men, but the trains of thought he has originated and set in action, possess a vitality and a momentum coördinate with his being. And every man is, in his place, a Hume or a Moses to some other man—a guide to the better world, or the moral Upas—the poisoner and the destroyer of the spiritual health and beauty of some other soul. It is true, the influence one man exerts over another man may not, and does not, always lie open to human observation. Still every man is as a city set upon a hill. He will be observed. He will be imitated by some subaltern or other in the school of good or bad morals. He will model some other mind. He will give to some other mind its peculiar moral physiognomy. And whether we can mark that moulding process or not, it does not escape the burning search of the Omniscient, in adjusting the moral value of the lives of each.

II. The good or the evil a man does lives after him. Each individual, living, self-conscious soul is a centre of moral power, a radiator of spiritual forces, either good or bad; for nothing is

neutral, nothing indifferent, or trivial, which helps to fashion souls and takes hold on the vitalities of our inner life, and thought, and feeling. Go where we may; do what we will; assume whatever style and stamp of character we choose: place ourselves in every possible social condition, high or low, rich or poor, we do throw off from us, and draw after us, and receive upon ourselves in return, trains of influences, which are infinite in their number and consequences, influences which mould and modify character, and therefore determine immortal destinies. The outworked results of this law we cannot estimate now, either with respect to ourselves or others. Not until the day of the revelation of all secret and hidden things, shall we know the full amount of good or evil, which had its starting point in the moral workings of our own lives, or of the lives of those who made with us the journey of life. We have no means of analysis or observation, by which we can solve the problem.

Now the workings of this law of mutual influences, we cannot evade, because such is the moral and social constitution of our nature. The human soul is so plastic, its susceptibilities so delicate, its sympathies so subtle and acute, that one mind cannot come in contact with another mind, without both giving and receiving influences of some sort or another.

We cannot be thrown into the society of our fellow-men by the calls of business or pleasure; we cannot be united to them by the ties of kindred, and family, and friendship, without leaving our moral mark after us—the godlikeness we have caught by reflection from the life of our Saviour, or the dark shadows and stains which sin, and pride, and passion, have cast upon our moral nature.

This machinery of moral causes, ever in active and unceasing play in forming character, is truly inexplicable and wonderful. The very thoughts that are now rising up and struggling for expression in my own mind—the thoughts, too, that are rising up and drifting through your minds now, in your seats, as you sit here, all calm and unexcited, may produce the most important results on other minds in other ages. Like those rivers that sometimes sink and disappear, running for a time in concealed and under-ground channels, gathering force as they go, and then gush up to the sunlight again in irrepressible fountains of living water, scattering themselves in a thousand directions over fields far away from the place where they disappeared; so may our thoughts and doings this day, and all the days of our lives run under ground, as it were, and come flashing up after long intervals in multiplied and manifold forms of virtue or vice, of beauty or deformity, of worship or impiety.

For example. If under the impulse of a holy and generous thought you do this day make the resolve to live a better and more consistent Christian life, and if you do actually express that

resolution in action, by repressing the uprisings of anger, pride, passion, and every form of sin. If you chasten your spirit into obedience. If you mould your life and conduct after the divine model of the Lord Jesus Christ, then you will set in action through your family and through your neighborhood, unacknowledged it may be, and undiscoverable by human eyes, but spread you will, the vital forces of a godly and spiritual life—forces that are destined to make the pulses of many a soul to beat hopefully and happily with the excitement of heavenly thoughts; nay, more, that shall make some other soul the spring and source of blessed influences to others, outwards and onwards, in an endless progression of usefulness and goodness.

You cannot live and be a good man, even in the lowliest and [illegible] walks of human life, without leaving your mark. [illegible] stamp upon the moral [illegible] will be seen and recognized [illegible] and [illegible] goodness. Your example shall [illegible] and [illegible] and that [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] accumulated [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] what [illegible] know [illegible] be the same [illegible] and [illegible] spirit of [illegible] and [illegible] another [illegible] and [illegible] be [illegible] is [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] and

humanity fail, when the heart and life of the doer are not in them nor in harmony with them. We often see the personal, well known character of an individual exerting a secret influence for mischief and evil, and much more powerfully too than any good influence he can exert, through the instrumentality of the most eloquent and able speeches. We must know that the sentiments that the man utters are the honest expressions of his own moral life before they can influence us. If his life and his precepts are in marked antagonism, he is as a teacher of morals powerless. It is the life and not the lip, the every-day home character and not the stage performances of the man, that go down the deepest into the heart of social life for good or evil. It is not the mere force of collected public effort, but the individual, personal influence, each giving the right tone to these efforts that must regenerate society.

III. But while I say this, I admit that the many associated and in many cases, the well directed labors of societies for the suppression of vice, and the amelioration of human wretchedness are among the boast and glory of the age. One association after another lays about it manfully. This one belabors that vice, and that one some other. Still comparatively little is accomplished. The blows of each tell upon the social wickedness of any given period, nearly as much as the blows of the Geologists' hammer upon the stability of the mountain rock. The error lies here. We are all in too great a hurry to reform others before we have thoroughly reformed ourselves—before we have acquired such a conception of right and duty as will spread itself with a felt omnipresence over the entire field of human responsibility. The world is not to be made morally better by mere associated labor companies, as one would drain a marsh or clear a forest. A work profounder, deeper, and more earnest than all this is needed. Each must be the actor and the subject, the reformer and the reformed, before the great heart of the world can be cleansed. Did every man realize *for himself* that his conduct is not narrowed to the sphere of his individual movements, but that it takes hold on all time, on all place; nay, more, that it passes forward into all the ages of the future, strengthening the moral discipline of some soul, confirming those habits of order, reverence, and self-government, that will fit *that* soul to strike a seraph's harp with a seraph's devotion, or sink it into a deep and yet a lower gulf of misery, thrust in upon its own unhallowed thoughts, and surging passions, amid the hauntings of conscious guilt and the agonies of hopeless despair? Did every man realize this, how soberminded and blameless each would strive to be in his deportment and intercourse with all around him?

Did every man but realize this one solemn truth, My thoughts, my example, my actions, are all indestructible and eternal as my soul—I say, did every man but realize this, our world might blow the trumpet of jubilee for its ransomed captives, and the whole universe of mind break forth into singing and gladness. Then

would every man feel that a stain upon his own or his neighbor's soul was not like a breath stain upon glass, or a finger-stain upon a book—a temporary obscuration of its brightness—an accident that can easily and hastily be remedied, but as a guilt stain and a hurt which nothing can either remove or heal but the power of Redeeming Love, the all-sufficient and cleansing virtue of the blood of the Lamb of Calvary.

Finally, if this be so, and it is a fact every man can easily prove or disprove by his own observations, our human life is not to be gauged merely by great deeds done, or by bold and prominent traits of character. The most effective energies of nature are all noiseless and gentle. The power, for example, that binds atom to atom, and world to world, and wheels the planetary systems of this vast universe in their appointed paths, is yet so gentle as to roll together the dew-drops and poise them each glittering on its own blade of wheat in the sunshine. It is not the fervid heats of the summer sun, nor the loud-voiced winds, nor the heavy rain-storms, nor the electric fires, leaping from cloud to cloud, that carry forward the vast interests of terrestial life. But it is the low, soft breezes, and the gentle showers, and the warm, kind sun, and the quiet dews that clothe the earth with verdure and fill the habitations of man with plenty and gladness.

Though every man is a teacher to his neighbor, yet it is not the man that wields the thunderbolts of Sinai as a terrorist, that makes the profoundest and widest impressions. It is by the exhibition of a pure Christlike love for man, and for his spiritual interests. It is by the right culture and reform of our own moral and intellectual natures, by the undimmed beauty of our lives, by infusing into the thoughts of others aspirations after goodness and heaven, by scattering around us the seeds of truth and right doing, in the humble, lowly and reverent trust, the good Husbandman and Shepherd of Israel will enable us to gather in our sheaves to the harvests of celestial blessedness with songs of praise and everlasting gladness. This is the kind of teaching that will go down the deepest into the human heart, and evolve from the most abandoned materials of humanity, thoughts, desires and hopes, clothed with celestial beauty. This is the resurrection voice that will start up earthly and stupid slumbering souls with the vital forces of the Christian life burning and glowing within.

What is it that has changed the moral aspect of the Christian world during the last 1800 years? Not simply the great sacrifice on Calvary. But the words of surpassing power uttered on the Mount of Olives—by the banks of the Jordan—by the sea side—in the streets of Jerusalem—by the well of Samaria—at the table of the Pharisee—beneath the sycamore tree at Jericho, and in that sad hour that preceded the scenes of Gethsemane. It is the mysterious energy of these words that has wrought such changes in the moral aspect of the world, and wherever they have been re-

peated, whether on the banks of the Tiber, or of the Thames—of the Hudson or the Ganges, they have become centres of refinement and human progress, and wherever they have been believed in and obeyed, they have excited a new life, even the life of God in the soul. And to cherish these thoughts in our inmost hearts, and to express them truly and lovingly in our actions is the grand mission of our lives. Wherefore let us see to it, that our lives are on the side of right, and goodness, and humanity. It will not do for us to cheer on, and to strengthen by our example and our influence, some weak brother in the direction of a bad habit, or of a wrong way of life, and when he falls a victim in the struggle, to seat ourselves down, and like the old prophet in the bitterness of unavailing regret over the man we have deceived, to say, "*Alas! my Brother.*" And if we are vain, showy, irreverent, unworshipful, lovers of pleasure more than we are lovers of God—hasting after this world's honors as our chief good, we will have our imitators—the diligent disciples of the same school of fashion, or frivolousness, or pleasure, to which we belong. So, too, if we are humane, gentle, spiritual, earnestly, and thoughtfully seeking after the kingdom of God, and its righteousness—if our piety be the free, unstudied outgoings of our hearts—zealous, without being fanatical—reverential, without being superstitious—earnest and constant, without hypocrisy, and guileless, we must from the law of influences we have thus far endeavored to illustrate, make vice abashed in our presence, and the profane, and the abandoned, though we utter not a word, feel, nay, even mourn the loss of virtue, for there is in true goodness, an awfulness and severity of beauty, which claims even the homage of a lost archangel. This power of Moral Influences, is a talent entrusted to us all. It is this that makes every man his brother's keeper—every man the guardian and fashioner of his neighbor's life and manners to a certain extent, and by the right or wrong use of which, we are instrumental in introducing the kingdom of light and life, or the kingdom of darkness and death—spreading around us circles of ever widening, and ever onward influences for good or for bad—dropping into some soul thoughts that will send it upward and heavenward, or cause it to gravitate downwards, and still downwards into abysses of self-shame and moral desolateness.

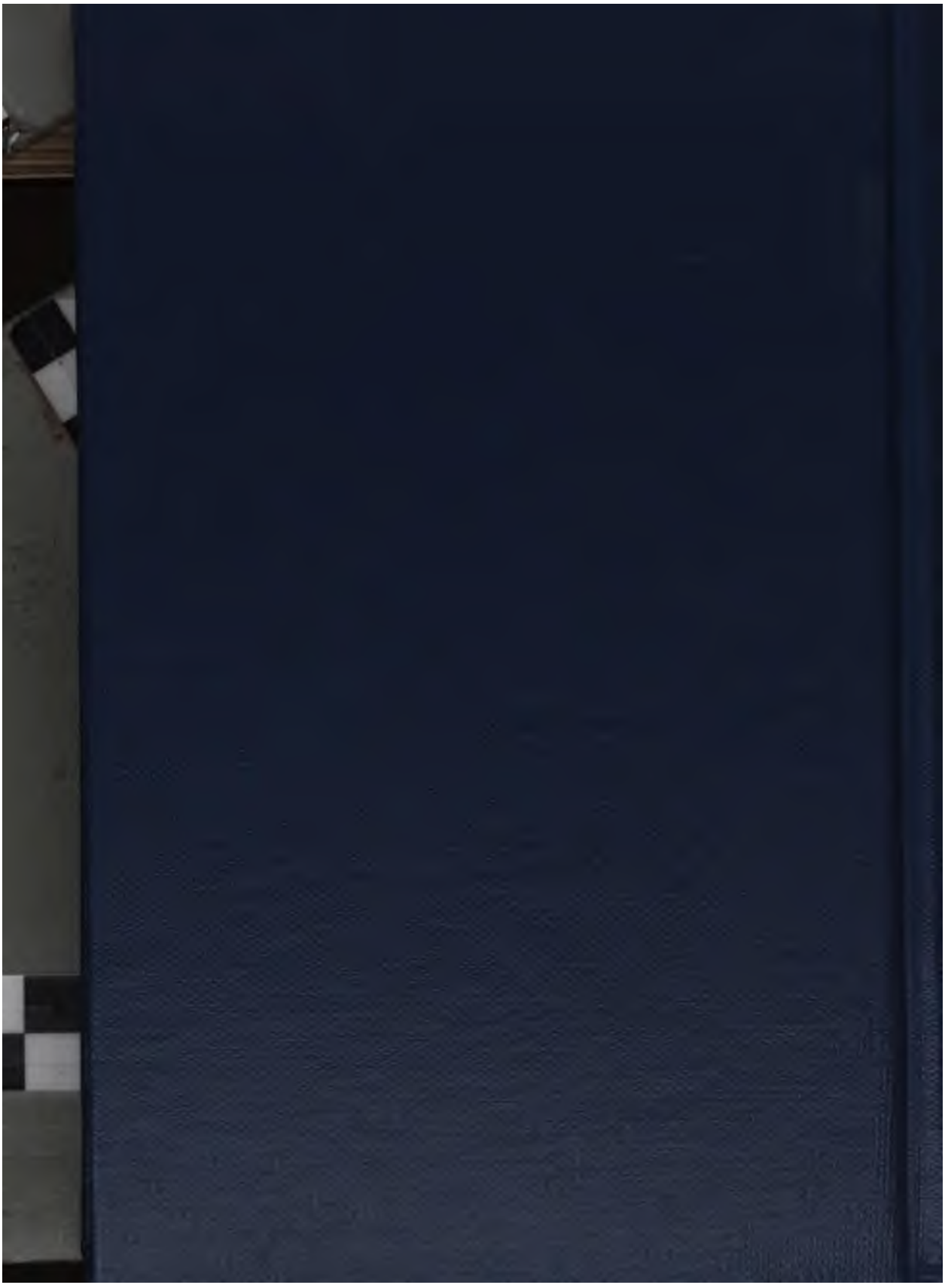
And now in conclusion, I would say to Young Men—to all who are beginning life's mystic march—you who are to be the example and the guides of the generation that is to follow you—tell me, if the doctrine I have attempted to unfold be true—and no man can disprove it—are there not grave and weighty responsibilities resting on you to be virtuous, upright, sober, right-living, and right-doing men? The youth of any community express the moral state of that community, for intelligence, virtue and goodness. If the heads of families in a community, love order, virtue, piety, and

peace themselves, the youth of the community, generally, will express it by the sobriety of their lives—by their respect for the civil and religious institutions of the land, and above all, by their love of goodness.

Now, whatever the cast and character of the youth may be, that are to rise up, when you have passed off from the scene of action, depends mainly on you. You are to be their instructors, their guides, their moral and religious keepers. Your piety or want of piety; your love of right and goodness, or love of self; your sober-mindedness, or your love of irreverent mirth, will multiply and enlarge itself, and give their moral expression, to the youth that are to come after you. It rests with you to say what it will be—whether it will be the expression of moral beauty, or of moral ugliness. That this must be so from the nature of the social relations is most plain. I will suppose a case for illustration's sake. Suppose a young man is a gambler, a dram drinker, or a swearer. Do not suppose these terms are below the dignity of the Pulpit? Whatever concerns the moral welfare of the youth of a community, that most legitimately belongs to the Preacher, and it is his right to speak—be silent who may. He is not to be a mere man-pleaser, but to warn, rebuke, exhort, instruct, and win to virtue and to God, as God giveth him grace and power.

Well, who made that young man a gambler, a swearer, a drunkard, or an immoral man? Most assuredly his guilt is the result of imitation and companionship. He learned to gamble, and swear, and drink, and be immoral, just as you learned your trades and professions, *from others*—others who taught him, and learned him, and cheered him on, by their example, their sneers at virtue, and piety, and soberness; their irreverence for the Sabbath, for the Scriptures, for the Church. They are just what their models and teachers have made them. Oh! better, if a man has by his influence, his example, or his sneers against virtue and religion—better, I say, for that man, if he knows of any man made a gambler, or an intemperate man—made so by his influence or example, better for him to travel, though it were to the ends of the earth, upon his bare feet, and beseech him to be a new man in Christ Jesus, than to meet that man's face in eternity —a dark soul-ruin, the workmanship of his hands.

Well, indeed, did Paul say to Timothy, "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

And equally earnest and emphatic are the words of Peter, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." Even so may it be. Amen.

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